

AFRICAN UNION

الاتحاد الأفريقي



UNION AFRICAINE

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**SECOND ORDINARY SESSION FOR
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**OFFICE, LOGISTICS, FACILITIES AND SUPPORT STAFF
FOR THE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT AND VICE
PRESIDENT OF THE PAU COUNCIL**

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DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY



Nurturing Quality, Exemplifying Excellence

**OFFICE, LOGISTICS, FACILITIES AND SUPPORT STAFF FOR THE
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT AND VICE PRESIDENT OF THE PAU
COUNCIL**

**PROPOSAL BY THE TECHNICAL TEAM ESTABLISHED AT THE INAUGURAL
MEETING OF THE COUNCIL**

16 OCTOBER 2015

A. Introduction

1. The President and Vice President of the Pan African University Council were elected by the Executive Council during the January 2015 Summit of the African Union, following the nomination of candidates from the five geographic regions of Africa. The process followed a provision of the PAU Statute, which calls for the election of the President and Vice President of the PAU Council by the Executive Council from a list of citizens of AU Member States nominated by the Bureau of the Conference of Ministers of Education of Africa (COMEDAF) or the Specialized Technical Committee (STC) in charge of education.
2. In addition to the President and Vice President, the PAU Statute also authorizes the Chairperson of the Commission to appoint 26 other members of the Council, mandated under the Statute to perform the following functions:
 - i. Promotion and discipline of academic and research staff of the PAU;
 - ii. Issuance of all PAU regulations, rules and measures and setting a code of conduct;
 - iii. Promotion of socio-cultural activities;
 - iv. Adoption, review and amendment of staff terms and conditions of service;
 - v. Identification and recommendation of new Centers;
 - vi. Approval of programs and budgets of the PAU;
 - vii. Consideration and adoption of the Rector's annual report;
 - viii. Approval of the strategic plan and operational plans of the PAU;
 - ix. Approval of agreements and conventions to be signed by the Rector; and,
 - x. Performance of any other functions within its mandate, necessary for the smooth operation and development of the PAU.
3. According to the PAU Statute, the President of the Council shall specifically perform the duties and tasks outlined below:
 - i. Set the agenda of the Council sessions in consultation with the Rector;
 - ii. Summon the Council members to attend Council sessions;
 - iii. Preside over the Council;
 - iv. Monitor discussions;
 - v. Represent the Council;
 - vi. Receive all communications addressed to the Council; and sign all official documents issued by the Council.
4. The role of the Vice President of the PAU Council is to chair meetings of the Council in the absence of the President. Following the January 2015 Summit, the Commission through the Bureau of the Commissioner for HRST, identified candidates to be appointed as members of the PAU Council in accordance with the provisions of the PAU Statute. After it was duly constituted, the Council held

its inaugural meeting at the headquarters of the African Union Commission in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on 25 June 2015.

5. The Staff Regulations and Rules of the African Union (Doc. Assembly/AU/4(XV)) set out the broad human resource policies for the staffing and administration of the organs of Union, including the Commission. They address the rights and obligations of the Union and, as well, embody the terms, conditions of service, basic rights, duties and obligations of all Elected Officials and Staff Members of the Union. Under the Staff Regulations and Rules, “Elected Officials”, defined as “any person(s) elected or appointed by the Assembly or the Executive Council to serve in an Organ of the Union” are a category distinct and separate from “Staff Members” of the Union, defined as “person(s) employed by the Union as continuing regular, regular, fixed-term or short-term personnel on the basis of a daily wage or monthly salary as provided for in the Regulations and Rules”.
6. In line with the provisions of its Regulation 2.3, the Staff Regulations and Rules of the AU apply to all employees (i.e., Staff Members) of the Union, irrespective of their categories and/or duration of their appointments. However, with regard to Elected Officials, the Staff Regulations and Rules are only applicable “where appropriate” and “until such time that a separate document governing the rights and benefits of this category of officials is made available”. To date, no such separate document has been made available and so the Staff Regulations and Rules continue to apply to Elected Officials where appropriate.
7. Under Article 7(5) of the Statute of the Pan African University, the Executive Council of the AU elects the President and Vice President of the PAU Council for a 3-year term, renewable once. Accordingly, the President and Vice President of the PAU Council are “Elected Officials” of the Union as per the definition of that term referred to above. Unfortunately, neither the PAU Statute nor the Staff Regulations and Rules of the AU comprehensively address the question of facilities, logistics and support staff for the office the President and Vice President of the PAU Council. It is, however, pertinent to note that Regulation 3(4)(c) of the Staff Regulations and Rules provides that “staff members shall be provided and entrusted with suitable offices, logistics and facilities necessary for the delivery of high quality service”. Suitable offices, logistics and facilities are extremely essential to facilitate the efficient delivery of the heavy mandate entrusted to the President and Vice President of the PAU Council.
8. Aside from Article 7(10) of the PAU Statute, which designates the Rector of the PAU to serve as the Secretary to the PAU Council, no further provision is made with respect to staff support for the office of the President and Vice President of the PAU Council. In this connection, it is relevant to note that the Staff Regulations and Rules permit Elected Officials to nominate any person to be

appointed as a “Special Appointee” to serve the Union at the discretion of the Elected Official for the duration of his or her term of office. As such, the standard practice at the Commission is that, following their election AU Commissioners nominate their Personal Assistants who are appointed as special appointees for the duration of the terms of their respective Commissioners. However, given the unique needs and exigencies of the office of the President and Vice President of the PAU Council, particularly the need to retain institutional knowledge and to ensure continuity of operations when the Presidency of the Council shifts, the question remains whether the use of term-limited special appointees as support staff will be suitable to that office.

9. At its inaugural meeting held on 25 June 2015, the Council established a Technical Team with the mandate to consider and make concrete proposals on the issue of staffing and logistics of the Office of the President of the Council for consideration at an extraordinary session of the Council. The Technical Team met in Addis Ababa on 5 and 6 October 2015 and considered working papers provided by the PAU Rectorate. This proposal reflects the outcomes of the Technical Team’s deliberations on the subject. It recommends the provision of physical office space at the Rectorate, and the assignment of an Administrative Assistant to service the Office of the President and Vice President of the PAU Council, with the objective of facilitating the efficient functioning of this office.

B. Universal Common Practice

10. In international academic circles, including in Africa, Councils are the highest governing bodies supervising the activities of universities. They carry out the same duties and responsibilities as trusteeships representing the interests and stakes of the general ownership of the universities. University Councils perform important oversight roles on academic activities, university management and administration.
11. The office of President of the Council, or its equivalent in the governing structure of most universities, has a social, economic and political significance; and is substantive, symbolic and ceremonial. The President of the Council serves as a public advocate for the University's interests and as a leader who guides its goals and governs its progress. He/she is concerned with creating, facilitating or enhancing productive working relationships among faculty, staff, and students; building close ties to the community and the university’s external constituents, and giving direction to its resource mobilization needs to further its missions of education, research and development.
12. Common practice is that most universities create an operational office with a suitably furnished adjoining salon/foyer (for receiving and holding meetings with

high level delegations) for the Council President within the campus or at an office hosting the executive branch of the university's management. This enables him/her to centralize the activities to be carried out by his/her office. Since the Presidents of university Councils are usually non-resident members within the management structure, an Officer, Executive or Administrative Assistant is assigned to manage their offices by handling correspondence as well as liaisons with the university administration, other members of the Council, and external parties.

C. Justification for an Office and an Executive or Administrative Assistant for the President and Vice President of the PAU Council

13. There are broad oversight and supervisory functions for the Council set out in the PAU Statute, especially in relation to making university rules and regulations, ensuring quality in academic output, making appropriate recommendations to the Commission, and scrutinizing recommendations from the Rectorate, the Senate and the Institute Boards. As leader of the Council, the President is the symbol of the apex of PAU governance, with the technical responsibility of streamlining the mandate, activities and impact of the work of the Council.
14. In order to carry out its oversight role stipulated under the PAU Statute, *the Council shall meet once a year in an ordinary session. Extraordinary sessions of Council may be convened at the request of the President or at least 2/3 of Council members and in consultation with the Commission.* Regular Council meetings, in addition to the annual ordinary sessions, are essential for the Council to be able to discharge its wide-ranging functions. And by virtue of his leadership position in the Council, the President has the task of agenda setting, mobilizing members, coordinating meetings, conferring with the Rectorate and the Commission, in addition to other commitments as may be required of his office in fostering the interests of the PAU.
15. To facilitate the effective functioning of this office, the President and Vice President of the Council will require:
 - a. A physical office to be located at the PAU Rectorate, and
 - b. An Executive or Administrative Assistant to manage the office
16. In conformity with universal best practice, a physical office for the President and Vice President of the PAU Council will create the enabling space and latitude to maintain Council files and correspondences, and facilitate for other Council members, the Commission, PAU Rectorate, Partners and other external parties, a centralized liaison with the office of the President of the Council. Whilst projecting the presence, permanency and oversight responsibilities of the

Council, the office also serves to further delineate the technical functions of the Council from the other administrative structures of the PAU.

D. Duties and responsibilities of the Administrative Assistant

17. The Office of the President of the PAU Council is to be managed by a qualified, seasoned Administrative Assistant, who has knowledge of English and French and is familiar with the PAU/AUC system, structures, rules and regulations. His/her main responsibilities will include handling correspondence and discharging secretarial and administrative duties pertaining to the Office of the President of the PAU Council. The Executive or Administrative Assistant will serve as the functional liaison facilitating the flow of information between the President of the Council and other internal and external stakeholders. He/she would provide personal assistance and support to the President and Vice President of the Council during Council meetings, and carry out tasks such as the following:
 - a. Devise and maintain office systems, including data management and filing;
 - b. Arrange travel, visas and accommodation for the President and Vice President and, occasionally, travel with the President or Vice President to take notes or dictation at meetings or to provide general assistance during presentations;
 - c. Screen phone calls, enquiries and requests to the President when he is in the office;
 - d. Meet and receive visitors to the Office of the President of the Council;
 - e. Organize and maintain diaries and appointments for the President of the Council;
 - f. Respond to incoming correspondence on behalf of the President of the Council;
 - g. Carry out relevant background research and present findings to the President of the Council;
 - h. Produce relevant documents, briefing papers, reports and presentation

E. Recommendations

18. The Technical Team recommended that:
 - a. The Administrative Assistant should service the entire Council rather than just the Office of the President and Vice President.
 - b. Since the President and Vice President are not likely to be resident in the country where the Rectorate is located, it is important for them to be provided with appropriate communications and other related

facilities for the performance of their functions. These facilities must include cellular phones with unlimited calling plans and roaming both across the continent and abroad, Internet access as well as a dedicated budgetary allocation to cover the costs of official travel of the President and Vice President.