

**DIRECTORATE OF INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION**

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Venue: Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

**Ministers of the African Union Discuss Actions to Mitigate the Devastating Impacts of COVID-19 and Address Urgent Challenges in Tourism Sector**

The African Union Ministers responsible for Tourism and members of the Bureau for the Specialized Technical Committee (STC) on Transport, Infrastructure, Intercontinental and Interregional Infrastructure, Energy and Tourism (STC-TTIET) held a meeting by Videoconference today 21<sup>st</sup> April 2020 on the invitation of H.E Dr Amani Abou-Zeid, Commissioner for Infrastructure and Energy at African Union Commission.

The main objective of this meeting was to discuss the urgent actions to support the continental strategy on COVID-19 pandemic as a way to implement the recommendations of the AU Heads of State and Government held on 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2020 by Video Conference. The second objective was to discuss the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic to the tourism sector and propose mitigation measures.

The African Union Commissioner for Infrastructure and Energy, H.E. Dr. Amani Abou-Zeid expressed her gratitude to the Hon. Ministers for honouring the invitation and further highlighted the negative economic impacts of COVID-19 to African tourism including the important losses of jobs related to tourism services, grounding of aircrafts and closure of airports and air transport related services and complete shutdown of important public transport services. She appealed to the Hon.Ministers to propose relief measures to help the industry recover immediately once the COVID-19 pandemic is contained

The bureau strongly underscored that the COVID-19 pandemic challenges our continent to deploy rapid, strong and lasting responses to create a strong African Tourism Industry

The Bureau reaffirmed their resolution to operationalize the African Tourism Strategic Framework and requested the Commission to take appropriate action to that effect.

The Ministers responsible for Tourism thanked the African Union Commission and its partners for the on-going work to contain the COVID-19 pandemic and committed to support the on-going activities in close collaboration with all the stakeholders.

**Note to the Editor**

The Specialized Technical Committee (STC), is the Ministerial decision-making organ of the African Union for the transport, energy, and tourism sectors as well as overall infrastructure

development matters. It was established with other similar sectorial organs initially as the Committee on Transport Energy and Communications under Article 25 of the African Economic Community Treaty (the Abuja Treaty) adopted by the Assembly of the Organisation of the African Unity (OAU) in 1994 and, subsequently, under Articles 14, 15, and 16 of the Constitutive Act of the African Union adopted by the AU Assembly in 2000. It was finally reconfigured into the STC on Transport, Transcontinental and Interregional Infrastructure, Energy and Tourism in February 2009 by the AU Assembly through its decision: Assembly/AU/Dec.227 (XII).

Replacement of the sector specific Ministerial conferences with STCs, is aimed at fostering multi-sector dialogues and, hence, formulation of comprehensive development strategies for the concerned sectors. STCs are expected to provide a platform for all stakeholders including the private sector and academia to share knowledge, experiences and solutions to common challenges in the development of the concerned sectors. In accordance with its Rules of Procedure, the STC meets biennially (once every two years). Institutional arrangement of the STC, its Sub-Committees and working groups enables all stakeholders to be adequately informed and involved in the implementation and reporting mechanisms of the STC Plans of Action.

The first meeting of the STC took place from 13 to 17 March 2017 in Lomé, Togo under the generous hosting of the Government of the Togolese Republic. The first session of the STC-TTIET rallied around the theme: Financing Infrastructure in Africa.

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