

DIRECTORATE OF INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION

Press release N° ____ /2022

Date: 16 June 2022

Venue: Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

2nd Extraordinary STC-TTIIIE Approves Urgent Measures to Tackle Impacts of Russia-Ukraine Crisis and African Common Position for COP27

Addis Ababa, 16 June 2022: The 2nd Extraordinary Session of the African Union Specialized Technical Committee on Transport, Transcontinental and Interregional Infrastructure, and Energy (STC-TTIIIE) that convened from June 14-16 virtually came to a close after making crucial decisions regarding the Russia-Ukraine crisis, the Common African Position Paper on Energy Access and Just Transition in Africa to be presented at COP27, the SAATM Dispute Settlement Mechanism and the revised African Civil Aviation Policy, among others.

The meeting, attended by the African Union Member States, Regional Economic Communities, and Specialized Pan-African Institutions is dubbed crucial to apprehend and effectively respond to the economic shocks that Africa is facing due to the ongoing Russia-Ukraine Crisis.

During the opening of the ministerial session, the Chair of the STC-TTIIIE Hon. Tsoeu Mokeretla, Minister of Transport of the Kingdom of Lesotho said the ongoing Russia-Ukraine Crisis is already taking its toll on Africa and it is time to collectively as a continent find ways of mitigating the impacts on the energy and infrastructure sectors thereby addressing the knock-on effects on other sectors.

African Union Commissioner for Infrastructure and Energy, Dr. Amani Abou-Zeid, calls the situation 'a double crisis' as it came at a time when African economies strive to recuperate from the global covid-19 pandemic, adding that the crisis has contributed to soaring prices of energy and high cost of transport in Africa which has negatively impacted agriculture, industry, trade, tourism, and many other socio-economic sectors in addition to important pressures on the public budgets of African countries.

Commissioner Abou-Zeid emphasizes the need to rapidly adapt to the existing situations and devise innovative ways to seize possible opportunities that may arise. “Africa can step in as an alternative source energy market through its number of projects under the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA) and other similar initiatives like the African Single Electricity Market (AfSEM) that can be expedited to first address Africa’s energy needs and export to other regions,” underscores the Commissioner.

The 2nd extraordinary session has also probed into and approved a Common African Position on Energy Access and Just Transition in Africa to be presented at COP27, set to be held in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt, in November 2022. The Position Paper highlights Africa’s short-, medium- and long-term pathways to meet the universal energy access and transition goals and seeks to achieve a favorable outcome from CoP27 for their financing and implementation.

The host of COP27 the Arab Republic of Egypt has also come up with a proposal for an Energy Access and Just Transition Initiative which the august body dwelt on. The meeting urged the AUC to work together with the Member States to consolidate all the different African proposals on Energy Access and Just Transition.

Stressing the need for Africa to speak with one voice at the COP 27, Commissioner Abou-Zeid underscored that “The world needs to recognize Africa’s unique realities and support its efforts to close the huge energy access gaps without being straight-jacketed into approaches that do not match our circumstances” sharing her concerns that Goal 7 of the UN Agenda 2030 might be difficult to attain without innovative approaches and collaborative efforts.

The Chair of the meeting called for the active participation of the AU Member States at the COP27. “In order to successfully push Africa’s position in addressing the adverse effects of climate change on energy and transport sectors, I encourage excellency ministers of transport and energy to be present at COP27 to advocate for a milestone outcome for Africa.”

The African Union Commission is tasked with the submission of the consolidated African Position to the African Group of Negotiators (AGN) for onward transmission to the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN) and the Committee of African Heads of State and Government on Climate Change (CAHOSCC) for adoption.

Various items in the transport sector were also considered by the high-level meeting with the objective to support the implementation of the Single African Air

Transport Market (SAATM), the establishment of the African Road Safety Observatory, and the development of the maritime transport sector. The SAATM Dispute Settlement Mechanism, the policy guidelines for negotiation of air service agreements between African countries and other countries and regions, the revised African Civil Aviation Policy (AFCAP), the final report of the study on the legal and institutional framework of the African Road Safety Observatory as well as the maritime transport action plan 2022-2023 were approved by the 2nd Extraordinary session of the STC-TTIIIE.

Note to the editor:

About the Specialized Technical Committees (STCs)

The Specialized Technical Committees (STCs), which constitute an important technical organ of the AU, were established under Article 25 of the African Economic Community Treaty (the Abuja Treaty). With the transformation of the OAU into the AU, the STCs were carried over by the Constitutive Act of the African Union under Articles 14 to 16.

The STCs are expected to work in close collaboration with the various departments of the AUC to provide well-informed inputs and decisions in their areas of specialization to the work of the AU Executive Council. They should also, be involved in monitoring development programmes implementation by the AUC and Regional Economic Communities (RECs).

Given the overall objective of accelerating continental integration and the importance attached to the effective implementation of programmes and projects of the Union, the operationalization of the STCs become imperative. To this end, the Assembly of the Union adopted the Decision: Assembly/AU/Dec.227 (XII) reconfiguring the existing STCs and created one on Transport, Intercontinental and Interregional Infrastructures, Energy and Tourism (STC-TIIIEET). This STC held its maiden meeting in the Togolese Republic in March 2017 and meets on a biennial basis.

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