



LESLIE RICHER  
DIRECTOR OF INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION

OPENING REMARKS  
STC – COMMUNICATION & INFORMATION  
TECHNOLOGIES

ADDIS ABABA ETHIOPIA 20<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2017

Excellency Chairperson of the STC on Communication & ICT, Excellencies representatives of Member States, representatives from the Diplomatic corps, development partners, distinguished guests ladies and gentlemen.

It is my great pleasure to welcome you to the Second Ordinary Session of the African Union Specialised Technical Committee on Communication & Information Technologies.

The ICT sector is a key contributor to the anticipated growth and development of the African continent. The continued spread of technology and the speed of innovation witnessed in this sector is helping to not only transform economies but also the lives of our African citizenry.

These transformations are as a result of the increased investments in the ICT sector resulting in the subsequent gains witnessed in areas such as Media, Telecommunications and Postal Services since the first STC in 2015. We commend the achievements made in implementation of previous Ministerial decisions and congratulate our esteemed Member States for their endeavour to develop the Communication and ICT sector.

Indeed as a result of previous Ministerial decisions, we have been able to successfully initiate and implement key initiatives including

1. DotAfrica delegation and operationalisation;
2. The African Declaration on Internet Governance and
3. The African Internet eXchange (AXIS project)

Our strategic framework, Agenda 2063 recognises that to transform Africa into the global powerhouse of the future, integration supported by world class communication and infrastructure connectivity is key.

This requires that as we seek to implement policies and programmes related to Communication and ICT, we must also invest in the improvement of our human capital by designing and structuring the right academic and technical training, defining and implementing adequate institutional capacity to manage the sector, as well as facilitating the right levels financial investment to support sustainable growth and expansion.

I would therefore like to call for the support of Member States to implement continental Communication and ICT programs such as:

1. The Policy and Regulation Initiative for Digital Development in Africa (PRIDA)
2. The domestication of the Malabo Convention on Cybersecurity & Personal Data Protection
3. The Pan-African e-Network program consolidation, and
4. Leveraging the Postal sector network for socio-economic development.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

Agenda 2063 recognises that for Africa to achieve its full potential, the investment in any sector including Communication and ICT must be holistic and inclusive, ensuring access by all members of society to technology and the knowledge economy.

Access to technological platforms and consequently wider information has led to increases in income levels, more so with the increased penetration of mobile phone technology which has spurred innovation and the entrepreneurial mind-set, creating opportunities for employment especially of our youth and even impacting other key sectors such as agriculture where farmers are able to access better market prices for their commodities. It behoves us therefore to ensure that we continue with the necessary sense of urgency to ensure that at both continental

and national levels we implement the key programmes that will support the prosperity which we aspire for as the people of Africa.

Finally, we note that the media have a key role to play within the Communication and ICT sector. We acknowledge and welcome the growing support from various media partners who recognise that for Agenda 2063 to achieve its intended outcomes and to position the African Union as a people centred union, we must ensure relevancy by reaching out to the people of this great continent. We welcome the support from media owners associations such as the African Media Initiative and journalist associations such as the Federation of African Journalists who during the recently held Africa Senior Media Dialogue in Addis Ababa Ethiopia, committed to support the African Union to enhance its dissemination of information related to Agenda 2063 and other initiatives and programmes of the African Union.

With these few remarks I would like to once again welcome you to this STC on Communication and Information Technologies and wish you fruitful deliberations over the coming days.

Thank you