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**ANNUAL REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE AFRICAN UNION
AND ITS ORGANS**

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A. INTRODUCTION

I. Preliminary Remarks

1. On behalf of the Commission and the other African Union (AU) Organs and Specialized Agencies, I have the honour, as the Chairperson of the Commission, to present the **Annual Report on the Activities of the Union and Its Organs** for the period of January to December 2019, pursuant to the decision of the Executive Council EX.CL./Dec.943(XXX) of January 2017.

2. During the year under review, in addition to their own mandated activities, the Commission and other AU Organs and Specialized Agencies were fully engaged in assisting Member States in the implementation of the Union's Agenda 2063 and, in particular, the flagship projects identified under the First Ten-Year Implementation Plan (FTYIP) and the Medium Term Plan 2018-2023 (MTP), as adopted by the Executive Council in June 2018 [EX.CL./Dec.1008(XXXIII)].

II. Highlights of Activities and Main Achievements

3. This section highlights some of the key results achieved and other issues addressed by the Commission and other Organs and institutions in 2019, especially with regard to the Agenda 2063 flagship projects.

4. The Commission finalized the draft Commodity Strategy which identified the following four strategic pillars: (i) commodity markets and pricing; (ii) linkages and diversification; (iii) governance and enabling environment; and (iv) skills development and research and development. The pillars will help guide the optimal use of African commodities to attain value addition, sustainable industrialization, economic diversification, structural transformation, development and enhanced trade. This Draft will be submitted to the policy organs in due course.

5. The AfCFTA Agreement came into effect on 30 May 2019, which was 30 days after the deposit of the 22nd instrument of ratification. As at 1 November 2019, fifty-four (54) Member States had signed the Agreement. Only one Member State has not yet done so. The Commission is engaging that country towards the signing and ratification of the Agreement accordingly. The 12th Extraordinary Session of the AU Assembly held in July 2019 in Niamey, Niger launched the operational phase of the AfCFTA. The Agreement is supported by the following instruments: the agreed AfCFTA Rules of Origin; Dashboard of the AU Trade Observatory; AfCFTA Trade in Goods Password Protected Dashboard; Pan-African Payments and Settlements System; and the Online Mechanism for Reporting, Monitoring and Elimination of Non-Tariff Barriers.

6. As at 1 November 2019, the Protocol on the Free Movement of Persons and Goods had been signed by 33 Member States, and 4 had deposited their instruments of ratification. 15 ratifications are required for its entry into force. At the level of RECs, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the East African

Community (EAC), have made commitments to that effect.

7. On the Financial Institutions, the Commission has developed a host country agreement for the African Monetary Institute (AMI) and prepared its draft statutes and structures, which will be a transition organ towards the creation of the ACB. As of November 2019, the instruments of the African Monetary Fund had been signed by two more Member States making the total of twelve countries. The other two institutions (ACB and AIB) have not registered significant progress in 2019. The Chairperson of the African Union has nominated Nana Dankwa Akufo-Addo, President of the Republic of Ghana, to champion the setting up of the financial institutions.

8. High speed train: Several visits and interactions have been undertaken to China as one of the main funding partners in light of the Joint Africa-China Five Years' Action Plan and Road Map (2016-2020). It has conducted three technical meetings (Nairobi, Dakar and Johannesburg) during 2019 to review the operational tools and relevant implementation strategies and timelines. Moreover, a study has been launched by the Commission for the Audit of the African Union of Railways (AUR), including the harmonization of norms and standards of a Trans African railway network.

9. African Outer Space Strategy: The Assembly decided that the Republic of Egypt shall host the Agency. Since then, the Commission has consulted Egypt and drafted the Host Agreement, which is under discussions for finalization and signature.

10. Pan African Virtual and E-University (PAVEU): During 2019, strategic partnerships have been established with four key organizations that work in ODeL to support quality assurance and delivery of PAVEU courses, including: African Council for Distance Education (ACDE), UNESCO, African Virtual University, and VMware.

11. Single Africa Air Transport Market (SAATM): So far, thirty (30) Member States have signed the Solemn Commitment to establish SAATM. 18 SAATM Member States have also signed a Memorandum of Implementation (MoI) that ensures the removal of any air service agreement restrictions that are not in compliance with the Yamoussoukro Decision. The stakeholders (African Development Bank-AfDB, European Union-EU, World Bank-WB) have made specific pledges to provide technical and financial support currently amounting to over US\$ 5.0 million for the joint SAATM Priority Action Plan.

12. Silencing the Guns by 2020: This AU initiative has been endorsed by the UNSC in February 2019 through Resolution 2457 (2019).

13. The Commission has published the 2019 Africa's Development Dynamics Report (ADD) on "Achieving Productive Transformation: Domestic Resource Mobilization". Further, it has finalized the drafting of a Model Law for mineral fiscal policy and regulations to act as a guide to Member States in reviewing Mineral regimes in line with the principles of the African Mineral Vision (AMV). Negotiations with Guinea of the African Mineral Development Center (AMDC) Hosting Agreement and assessment of premises to house the AMDC Secretariat. Currently, 6 countries have signed and 3 have ratified the Statutes.

14. On investing in the African people, especially the youth, women and children:

On the Implementation of the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA), the Chairperson of the Commission launched the “one million by 2021 initiative” in the implementation of the AU roadmap on Harnessing the Demographic Dividend and catalyze action for youth development in Africa, during the Pan African Youth Forum from 24 to 27 April 2019 in Addis Ababa which gathered 400 youth. The Commission also supported the African Union campaign to end child marriage, together with the AU Champion, President Edgar Lungu of Zambia, while undertaking actions for establishing the African Youth Fund and African Youth Volunteers Corps as well as the programme for Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment.

15. Democracy and Elections: In 2019, the Commission observed 15 elections in Africa, in the form of pre-electoral evaluation missions, or long and short-term observation missions. It also conducted a study, with guidelines on constitutionalism, as a complement to the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance, laying down the modalities for possible amendments to national constitutions, as part of the implementation of the decision adopted by the Peace and Security Council (PSC) at its 432nd meeting, on the elaboration of a unified strategy to combat unconstitutional changes of government in Africa.

16. The Fight against Corruption: During 2019, only two Member States ratified the AU Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption, namely Mauritius and Sao Tome et Principe, bringing the total to forty-two (42) countries which have ratified the AU Convention and are State Parties to it.

17. With regard to peace and security, as well as conflict prevention and management, the Commission continued its efforts to provide assistance to the countries concerned, namely, Libya, Comoros, and Somalia, through the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), South Sudan and The Sudan, through the African Union Mission in Darfur UNAMID), Mali and the Sahel, Central African Republic (CAR), Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Burundi and Guinea-Bissau. Furthermore, it provided support to six (6) Member States, under capacity building in the area of conflict prevention and early warning. In addition, within the framework of the African Union Border Programme (AUBP), the Commission provided support to sixteen (16) countries, within the context of their delimitation, demarcation and reaffirmation exercises, as well as the promotion of cross-border cooperation.

18. The Report also covers the activities undertaken by the other AU Organs and Institutions, including: ACHPR, AfCHPR, PAP, AUABC, AUCIL, ACERWC, AUDA-NEPAD, APRM, AIR and ECOSOCC.

19. The Report also focuses on the activities undertaken by the Commission with the African Civil society as well as the Diaspora where interactions have been encountered with the Diaspora from the Americas and Caribbean, Europe, Middle East, Asia and Oceania, with a view to enhancing positive image through economic self-reliance and culture. To boost the trade sector, the Commission entered into global commitments with AGOA, WTO, as well as consultations with the South-South Cooperation institutions such as MERCOSUR and ASEAN.

20. Service delivery, partnerships and outreach: Efforts undertaken to enhance, strengthen and sustain accountability across the Union as well as the reforms towards

professional recruitment and selection in line with the decisions of the Extraordinary Session of the Assembly of November 2018. Other activities aim at strengthening the AU Budgetary Process in line with the Golden Rules, implementing the reformulated Scale of Assessment as approved by the Assembly in February 2019 as well as the Implementation of the 0.2% Import Levy. As of 11 October 2019, seventeen (17) countries were collecting the 0.2% import levy, representing about 31% of AU membership. Collectively, their assessed contribution for 2019 make up 29% of the total assessed to Member States. All the 17 countries have remitted to AU either partially or in full for 2019 budget. Sixteen (16) of the levy collecting countries have cleared all arrears they had prior to starting implementing the levy. Collectively, these countries are assessed US\$79,925,060.00 for regular budget and US\$18,551,000.00 as contribution to Peace Fund, representing 29%, respectively.

21. Streamlining the Work of Policy Organs and Promoting Synergy with other AU Organs, the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and other Stakeholders.

22. Evaluation of strategic partnerships and follow up on partnerships as Africa-Arab, FOCAC, TICAD, AU-EU, Africa-Turkey, Africa-India as well as Institutional Partnerships (Norway, France, UK, Germany, Russia and USA).

B. UPDATE ON FLAGSHIP PROJECTS

23. Over the reporting period, the Commission and the African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD) developed an empirical methodology that will guide national, regional and continental African Union (AU) bodies to track and report on the implementation of Agenda 2063.

24. The Continental Dashboard on Agenda 2063 below, developed by AUDA-NEPAD, shows the overall progress against the goals, strategic priority areas encapsulated with the various Aspirations and Goals of Agenda 2063:

Priority Area	Agenda 2063 Target	Score
OVERALL CONTINENTAL SCORE		40%
ASPIRATION 1: A PROSPEROUS AFRICA BASED ON INCLUSIVE GROWTH AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT		50%
Priority Area	Agenda 2063 Target	Score
Goal 1: A High Standard of Living, Quality of Life and Well Being for All		54%
Goal 2: Well Educated Citizens and Skills revolution underpinned by Science, Technology and Innovation		46%
Goal 3: Healthy and Well-Nourished Citizens		79%
Goal 4: Transformed Economies and Job Creation		0%

Priority Area	Agenda 2063 Target	Score
Goal 5: Modern Agriculture for increased productivity and production		44%
Goal 6: Blue/ ocean economy for accelerated economic growth		91%
Goal 7: Environmentally sustainable climate resilient economies and communities		34%
ASPIRATION 2: AN INTEGRATED CONTINENT, POLITICALLY UNITED AND BASED ON THE IDEALS OF PAN-AFRICANISM AND A VISION OF AFRICAN RENAISSANCE		49%
Goal 8: United Africa (Federal or Confederate)		90%
Goal 9: Key Continental Financial and Monetary Institutions established and functional		33%
Goal 10: World Class Infrastructure criss-crosses Africa		24%
ASPIRATION 3: AN AFRICA OF GOOD GOVERNANCE, DEMOCRACY, RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS, JUSTICE AND THE RULE OF LAW		8%
Goal 11: Democratic values, practices, universal principles of human rights, justice and the rule of law entrenched		15%
Goal 12: Capable institutions and transformed leadership in place at all levels		1%
ASPIRATION 4. A PEACEFUL AND SECURE AFRICA		100%
Goal 13: Peace, Security and Stability are preserved		100%
Goal 14: A Stable and Peaceful Africa		100%
Goal 15: A Fully Functional and Operational African Peace and Security Architecture		100%
ASPIRATION 5: AFRICA WITH A STRONG CULTURAL IDENTITY, COMMON HERITAGE, VALUES AND ETHICS		0%
Goal 16: African Cultural Renaissance is pre-eminent		0%
ASPIRATION 6. AN AFRICA WHOSE DEVELOPMENT IS PEOPLE DRIVEN, RELYING ON THE POTENTIAL OF THE AFRICAN PEOPLE		42%
Goal 17: Full Gender Equality in All Spheres of Life		42%
Goal 18: Engaged and Empowered Youth and Children		- 226%
ASPIRATION 7: AFRICA AS A STRONG AND INFLUENTIAL GLOBAL PARTNER		32%
Goal 19: Africa as a major partner in global affairs and peaceful co-existence		22%
Goal 20: Africa takes full responsibility for financing her development		41%

Source: AUDA-NEPAD, November 2019

25. The Assembly, in its decision Assembly/AU/Dec.565(XXIV) of January 2015, identified twelve flagship projects as part of Agenda 2063's FTYIP. This section

provides a status report on their implementation during the period January to December 2019.

I. African Commodity Strategy

26. In 2019, the Commission finalized the development of the Draft AU Commodity Strategy that addresses challenges in three main commodities sectors, namely: agriculture, mining, and energy. The draft Strategy also identifies the following four strategic pillars: (i) commodity markets and pricing; (ii) linkages and diversification; (iii) governance and enabling environment; and (iv) skills development and research and development. The pillars will help guide the optimal use of African commodities to attain value addition, sustainable industrialization, economic diversification, structural transformation, development and enhanced trade.

27. The Draft Commodity Strategy was presented to the 2nd Meeting of the STC on Trade, Industry and Mining in January 2019. It recommended that further consultations be carried out to address the observations and recommendations. Consequently, the Commission convened a meeting of experts in Addis Ababa from 25 to 28 November 2019 whose outcomes were to be presented to an extraordinary STC of Ministers of Trade, Industry and Minerals for final consideration and adoption in December 2019.

II. African Continental Free Trade Area

28. Following the signing of the Agreement establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) in March 2018, in Kigali, and subsequent work to finalize its accompanying protocols, the June-July 2018 AU Summit in Nouakchott gave further guidance. It directed the AU Ministers responsible for Trade to complete all outstanding work on Phase 1 negotiations and submit the outcomes to the Assembly at the January-February 2019 Summit. This includes (i) the Schedules of Specific Commitments on Trade in Services; (ii) the finalization of Annex 1 of the Protocol on Trade in Goods dealing with the Schedules of Tariff Concessions; and (iii) the Annexes on Trade Remedies and Rules of Origin. The Assembly also directed that Phase 2 negotiations related to investment, intellectual property rights and competition policy be concluded by January 2020.

29. The AfCFTA Agreement came into effect on 30th May 2019, which was 30 days after the deposit of the 22nd instrument of ratification. As of 1 November 2019, fifty-four (54) African Union Member States had signed the Agreement. Only Eritrea is yet to do so. The Commission is engaging with the Eritrean Government towards the signing and ratification of the Agreement accordingly.

30. As of 1 November 2019, the following twenty-eight (28) countries had deposited their instruments of ratification with the Commission, hence became State Parties: Burkina Faso, Chad, Republic of Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Egypt, Eswatini, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Gabon, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Namibia, Niger, Rwanda, Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic, São Tomé and Príncipe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Togo, Uganda, and Zimbabwe.

31. The 12th Extraordinary Session of the AU Assembly held in July 2019, in Niamey, Niger, launched the operational phase of the AfCFTA. The Agreement is supported by the following instruments: the agreed AfCFTA Rules of Origin; Dashboard of the AU Trade Observatory; AfCFTA Trade in Goods Password Protected Dashboard; Pan-African Payments and Settlements System; and The Online Mechanism for Reporting, Monitoring and Elimination of Non-Tariff Barriers.

32. In addition, the 12th Extraordinary Session of the Assembly decided as follows:

- a) the AfCFTA would be hosted by Ghana;
- b) Final schedules of Tariff Concessions and outstanding Rules of Origin for the AfCFTA, be submitted to its February 2020 Ordinary Summit;
- c) Dismantling of tariffs should start not later than 1 July 2020, to allow the start of trading within the AfCFTA Regime on the same day;
- d) the Interim AfCFTA Secretariat should organize the inaugural meeting of the AfCFTA Council of Ministers not later than 31 October 2019;
- e) the Commission should ensure that the AfCFTA Secretariat is operational no later than 31 March 2020; and that
- f) 7 July of each year be designated as “*the Africa Integration Day*” without being a public holiday to commemorate the operationalization of the AfCFTA Agreement.

33. The Council of Ministers was established in terms of Article 11 of the AfCFTA Agreement and consist of the Ministers responsible for Trade or such other Ministers, authorities, or officials duly designated by the State Parties. It comprises Member States which have ratified the Agreement and it will choose its own bureau. The functions of the Council of Ministers shall in main be to ensure effective implementation and enforcement of the Agreement and other instruments relevant to the AfCFTA. These functions are different from those given to the African Union Ministers of Trade (AMOT) which deals with negotiations. The first meeting of the Council of Ministers was held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on 24 to 25 October 2019.

34. As Phase I negotiating issues draw to a close, it is anticipated that Phase II negotiations on Investment, Competition Policy, and Intellectual Property Rights commence shortly. It should be recalled that the 7th Meeting of the AMOT held in December 2018 in Cairo, Egypt, gave the deadline of December 2020 for the conclusion of these phase II negotiations. As an essential step towards the start of trade on 1st July 2020, several results have been achieved with regard to the AfCFTA Schedules of Tariff Concessions in Trade in Goods. They are, among others, the Conclusion of the Outstanding Issues on the Modalities of Tariff Liberalization; the Adoption of the Template on Tariff Liberalization; the Submission of Tariff Offers as well as the Cleaning, Verification and Consolidation of Tariff and Import Data. The road map for finalisation of regulation in Trade in Services has been aligned. In their meeting held in Niamey, the African Ministers of Trade reaffirmed that the Schedules of Specific Commitment of the Priority Sectors be finalised by January 2020. Furthermore, the Ministers agreed that the remaining Services Sectors and the Regulatory Cooperation Frameworks be finalized by June 2020.

III. Free Movement of Persons in Africa and the African

Passport

35. The need to build an Africa where borders between States are transformed into gateways for communication and movement, has always been the central preoccupation of African Leaders, as stated in the Abuja Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community, and more recently, the Protocol to the Treaty on Free Movement of Persons, Right of Residence and Right of Establishment. However, difficulties have been encountered in the concrete implementation of the clearly demonstrated political will, despite the fact that free movement of persons in Africa will unlock the economic potential in Africa, and speed up integration and socio-economic development, which is the ultimate aspiration of all Africans.

36. Efforts to open national borders through the issuance of visas on arrival observed in some Member States, which are commendable, however remain limited at continental level, due to failure to obtain the required number of instruments of ratification for the entry into force of the Protocol. To date, progress in the area of free movement of persons and goods is as follows:

- i) 33 signatures of the Protocol and 4 instruments of ratification deposited by Member States. 15 ratifications are required for its entry into force;
- ii) Political will and commitment already made for the free movement of persons in two RECs (ECOWAS and EAC);
- iii) Gradual implementation of the Protocol on Free Movement by Member States that have continued to ease their visa regimes, has facilitated the issuance of visas on arrival, as laid down in the Protocol on Free Movement.

37. In order to give greater impetus to the acceleration of free movement of persons and goods in the Continent, there is a need to designate a Head of State or Government as Leader of this key issue, for lobbying with his/her peers for the ratification of the Protocol, in close collaboration with the AU Commission. As several Heads of State have repeatedly stated, implementation of the free movement of persons and goods agenda should be carried out in tandem with that of the African Continental Free Trade Area, for reasons of consistency and efficiency.

IV. Continental Monetary and Financial Institutions

38. Originating from the Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community (The Abuja Treaty) and other AU Policy Organs' decisions, Agenda 2063 has incorporated some pan-African financial institutions as flagship projects under its framework. These are: The African Central Bank (ACB), African Monetary Fund (AMF), African Investment Bank (AIB), and Pan-African Stock Exchange (PASE).

39. In order to accelerate the setting up of the AU Financial Institutions (AUFIs), the 2019 STC on Finance, Monetary Affairs, Economic Planning, and Integration requested the Commission to develop a strategy on how to accelerate the signature and ratification of related legal instruments. In that regard, a study was conducted to establish the reasons behind the delay in signature and ratification of the legal instruments on the AUFIs. Subsequently, a meeting was held with selected Member States to obtain in-depth information and validate the study. Based on the results of the study, a strategy to expedite the process was developed and the implementation

will commence immediately.

40. To assist in advocating for signature and ratification, the Chairperson of the African Union has nominated H.E. Nana Dankwa Akufo-Addo, President of the Republic of Ghana, to champion the setting up of the financial institutions.

41. Given the urgent need for Africa to assume its financial self-sufficiency through its own financial institutions, the Commission would like to strongly urge Member States to make a firm commitment to translate Article 19 of the Constitutive Act of the AU that recognizes ACB, AMF and AIB into reality by expeditiously signing and ratifying the AUFIs legal instruments, for those who have not yet done so.

42. In 2019, the process towards putting in place the financial institutions has continued as follows:

The African Central Bank (ACB)

43. The Commission together with the Association of African Central Banks (AACB) organized a consultative meeting of the AUC-RECs-AACB on the convergence criteria and timelines for the establishment of the African Central Bank from 1 to 3 July 2019 in Niamey, Niger, as requested by the 2019 STC Finance, Monetary Affairs, Economic Planning, and Integration. The meeting noted that there were divergences in the macroeconomic convergence criteria of RECs and variances in the timelines for the establishment of regional single currencies. For purposes of having a single currency at continental level, the meeting emphasized that the thresholds in all RECs criteria must be aligned to the criteria set at continental level. As such, RECs must adhere to the criteria as set by the AACB to achieve the same monetary integration goal.

44. The consultative meeting further stressed the importance of full commitment of Member States in adhering to the timelines of the establishment of the African Central Bank. Therefore, it was agreed that national parliaments should be informed on the convergence criteria to garner their full support to ensure the implementation of the Strategy. Meanwhile, the Commission has developed a host country agreement for the African Monetary Institute (AMI) and prepared its draft statutes and structures, which will be a transition organ towards the creation of the ACB. In 2020, the Commission is planning to set up the AMI by recruiting appropriate human resources to start the implementation of the joint strategy and monitor the performances of Member States in implementing the macroeconomic convergence criteria.

The African Monetary Fund

45. As of November 2019, the instruments of the African Monetary Fund had been signed by two more Member States making the total of twelve (12) countries. The list now comprises Benin, Cameroon, Chad, Congo, Comoros, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Guinea, Mauritania, Sao Tome and Principe, Togo and Zambia. In addition, one signature of ratification has now been deposited by Chad for the Fund's legal instruments. The operationalization of the African Monetary Fund in Yaoundé is expected to progress following the conclusion of negotiations and signature of the Host Country Agreement for the Fund between the Commission and the Republic of

Cameroon.

The African Investment Bank

46. During 2019, there has been no change on the list of Member States which have signed the related legal instruments. They remain twenty-two, namely, Angola, Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Comoros, Republic of the Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea Bissau, Guinea, Liberia, Libya, Madagascar, Niger, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Sao Tome and Principe, Togo and Zambia had signed the legal instruments of the AIB. However, with one additional Member State ratifying the Instruments this year, the total number of Member States is six (6) namely: Benin, Burkina Faso, Congo, Chad, Libya, and Togo.

V. The Grand Inga Dam

47. The “Grand Inga Hydropower Project” in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is under review following an overall scheme (Inga 3 to Inga 8) that is intended to reach its full capacity of over 44,000 MW and contribute to electricity supply to the DRC and to the entire continent.

48. In 2019, the Government of DRC through the “*Agence de Développement et de Promotion du Projet Inga (ADPI)*” embarked on a campaign to promote the Grand Inga Dam project by taking part in the World Hydro Congress in Paris in May 2019. Meanwhile, the Commission organized in collaboration with UNEP and the Southern African Institute for Environmental Assessment, a training course on Strategic Environmental Assessment for DRC senior level decision-makers and African stakeholders (Regional Power Pools and Regional Economic Communities). The training took place from 30 September to 2 October 2019 in Addis Ababa. Currently, the DRC authorities are in discussion with Chinese and Spanish Consortium on the legal and operationalization modalities of the Consortium for Inga III.

VI. Africa Integrated High-Speed Train Network

49. The African Integrated High-Speed Railway Network Project (AIHSRN) is a Commission-led initiative designed to interconnect African capitals, economic and other industrial hubs, the major tourism locations with appropriate high speed rail technology, other complementary electricity/power and ICT broadband infrastructure and services. In implementing the project, a core team of African experts under the leadership of the Commission was formed with the AUC, AUDA-NEPAD, Specialized Institutions and other relevant partner organizations. Several visits and interactions have been undertaken to and with the People's Republic of China, as one of the main funding partners, which concluded by the signing of the Joint Africa-China Five Years' Action Plan and Road Map (2016-2020).

50. The Commission is in the process of setting up the Project Implementation Unit (PIU) and has conducted three technical meetings (Nairobi, Dakar and Johannesburg) during 2019 to review the operational tools and relevant implementation strategies and timelines. Moreover, in the framework of the general process of revitalization of the railway sector in Africa, a study has been launched by the Commission for the Audit of the African Union of Railways (AUR), including the harmonization of norms and

standards of a Trans African railway network.

51. The Commission is also finalizing a Communication strategy for the AIHSRN project. In this respect, a video clip for the promotion of the project has been launched during the PIDA week edition held in Cairo, Egypt from 24 to 29 November 2019. During this important event, Member States have validated a Detailed Scoping Study. This Study summarizes the concept and the technical options as well as a general agenda for the way forward.

VII. African Outer Space Strategy

52. In 2019, the Commission issued an open call to all Member States to express interest in hosting the African Space Agency (ASE). A high level panel was convened to review the applications and conduct evaluation on the bids received. The Report of the High Level Panel was considered by the Assembly which decided that the Republic of Egypt shall host the Agency (vide Decision Assembly/AU/Dec.748(XXXII)). Since then, the Commission has consulted Egypt and drafted the Host Agreement, which is currently under discussions for finalization and signature. In this regard, the PRC and its relevant Sub-Committees should consider without delay and validate the reports on the structural and financial Implications of the operationalization of the ASE, in line with the relevant Assembly decisions.

53. As part of the implementation of the African Outer Space Programme, the Commission convened the third Annual African Space Dialogue from 12 to 14 June 2019 in Dakar, Senegal, with the participation of the National Space Agencies, space institutions, private sector and academia.

54. During the reporting period, four studies were also carried out by the Commission to serve as the baseline on which the ASE will build upon while developing operational programmes and missions. Two of the sectorial studies were endorsed during the African Space Dialogue, namely: Study on African Private Sector in Earth Observation, Geospatial and Allied Technologies; and Study on Navigation and Positioning in Africa.

55. The Commission participated in the United Nations Committee for Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UN-COPUOS), which is the supreme body of all space treaties globally, and the International Astronautical Congress, the largest gathering of all space actors globally. These global activities are aimed at fortifying Africa's space agenda in the global arena.

56. All Member States, RECs and other relevant continental institutions are, therefore, urged to proactively participate in Africa's journey towards becoming an equal global space player, by operationalising the ASE and building capabilities in (i) Earth Observation, (ii) Satellite Communication, (iii) Navigation and Positioning, and (iv) Space Science and Astronomy, as articulated in the African Space Policy and Strategy.

VIII. Pan African Virtual and E-University (PAVEU)

57. The Pan African Virtual and E-University (PAVEU) is one of AU's flagship

projects that has been proposed for addressing Agenda 2063's needs for accelerating development of human capital, science and technology and innovation through increasing access to tertiary and continuing education in Africa, thereby capitalizing on the digital revolution and global knowledge. In November 2019, four (4) course programmes have been launched including: Introduction to Virtualization; Entrepreneurship Knowledge and Skills and Digital Literacy with Cloud Computing; Skills for Employability; and Media and Information Literacy.

58. PAVEU Project Implementation Framework was developed to guide the implementation of the PAVEU in terms of its mission and scope of work, principles and core values and other related technical aspects. The document also addresses a possible business plan and the financial sustainability of the PAVEU, including guidelines on the Institute's management structures, staffing and potential partnerships with other role players. Over 2019, strategic partnerships have been established with four key organizations that work in ODeL to support quality assurance and delivery of PAVEU courses, including: African Council for Distance Education (ACDE), UNESCO, African Virtual University, and VMware.

IX. Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM)

59. Following the adoption by the Assembly of January 2015 of the Declaration on the establishment of a Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM) in the implementation of the Yamoussoukro Decision (1999), it was launched as a flagship project officially at the Assembly in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on 29th January 2018. So far, thirty (30) Member States have signed the Solemn Commitment to the establishment of the SAATM, namely: Benin, Burkina Faso, Botswana, Cabo Verde, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Republic of Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Chad, Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Mali, Morocco, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Eswatini, Togo and Zimbabwe. Equatorial Guinea is also finalizing the internal administrative procedures to sign the solemn commitment which will increase the number of SAATM States to thirty-one (31).

60. To date, the following developments have been registered:

- i) 18 SAATM Member States have also signed a Memorandum of Implementation (Mol) that ensures the removal of any air service agreement restrictions that are not in compliance with the Yamoussoukro Decision;
- ii) 11 out of the 29 States comply 100% with all the concrete measures, namely: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Ethiopia, Ghana, Mozambique, Niger, Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Gambia and Togo. These countries are commended for the fulfilment of their commitments;
- iii) Draft Guidelines for negotiation of air service agreements between SAATM States and third countries have been developed and are under review for submission to AU Policy Organs for validation;
- iv) IATA has developed a SAATM 55 Country Index using the SAATM enablers (Safety, Security Infrastructure, Visa openness, etc.) as indices to identify State and airline readiness for SAATM and as a support advocacy tool;
- v) A joint stakeholders' Priority Action Plan for the SAATM has been established and is updated annually;

- vi) The stakeholders African Development Bank (AfDB), European Union (EU), World Bank (WB) have made specific pledges to provide technical and financial support currently amounting to over US\$ 5.0 million for the joint SAATM Priority Action Plan;
- vii) A new Secretary General of the African Civil Aviation Commission (AFCAC) also Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the SAATM Executing Agency has been recruited.

61. Among the challenges to be addressed through collaborative efforts by the African Union, its Member States and other relevant stakeholders are:

- i) Inadequate financial resources to enable the Executing Agency to become operational;
- ii) Slow pace of Member States in subscribing to the Solemn Commitment;
- iii) Lack of technical resources and tools for effective advocacy to the remaining states;
- iv) Incomplete policy, legal and regulatory framework, including external policy, dispute settlement mechanism and the African Aviation Tribunal and board of appeal;
- v) Capacity building of Member States and RECs on the implementation of the YD regulatory text (competition and consumer protection) and competition rules; and
- vi) Elaborating a continental aviation infrastructure master plan to cope with future traffic growth.

62. The following recommendations are made as a way forward to address the above challenges:

- i) To engage further advocacy efforts through the Leader of the Project who may be assisted by regional champions with a target to reach 40 Member States;
- ii) Validation and dissemination of the External Policy Guidelines with Binding Clauses for negotiation of air services agreements with non-African states and regions;
- iii) Provision of technical assistance to ensure compliance with ICAO Standards;
- iv) Determination of sustainable resource mobilization mechanism for the Executing Agency;
- v) Elaboration of aviation infrastructure master plan (airports, navigation facilities, etc.) with priority projects to be included in second phase of the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa-PAP (PIDA-PAP);
- vi) Initiating elaboration of a Single Sky Architecture for Africa to be completed by 2023.

X. Silencing the Guns by 2020

63. This Flagship Project is an integral part of the implementation of Agenda 2063, which aims at building a peaceful, prosperous and integrated Continent. Charged with its implementation, the Peace and Security Council, has made efforts within the framework of the Roadmap adopted by its decision-making organs in 2017. Such

efforts include various joint initiatives and actions by the Commission, the RECS and Regional Mechanisms, other AU Organs, the United Nations, Civil Society Organisations and AU Partners, according to the division of labour determined by the main Roadmap. We owe a debt of gratitude to the United Nations Security Council, African Members of that Council, particularly Equatorial Guinea, as President of the UN Security Council for February 2019. The joint mobilisation of all these actors culminated in the adoption of UN Resolution 2457 (2019), on the AU initiative, aimed at silencing the guns in Africa.

64. My High Representative for “*Silencing the Guns by 2020* », continues in the wake of efforts initiated in 2017 by the AU Commission, Member States and partners, geared towards exploring the best options to advance the process for the implementation of this important Flagship Project. The adoption by the July 2019 Session of the Assembly of the Union of “*Silencing the Guns*” as the theme of the year 2020, is an indicator of the political will to speed up the implementation of this key Flagship Project.

XI. Cybersecurity

65. The Commission hosted the Annual Meeting of the Global Forum for Cybersecurity Expertise (GFCE) from 8 to 10 October 2019, which was followed on 11 October by the Global Cyber Stability Commission Meeting and AU/UN negotiations on International Cybersecurity matters and their impact on International peace and security within the framework of the UN Government Group Experts (UNGGE) regional consultations.

66. Meanwhile, AUDA-NEPAD rendered support to 14 countries, namely Benin, Chad, Congo, DRC, Gabon, Guinea, Kenya, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Rwanda, Senegal, Tunisia and Uganda and two RECs (ECCAS and UMA) in assessment on Cybersecurity regulation and policy. The assessment was made on several parameters - including REC membership, signing of the AU Convention on Cybersecurity, representation on PAP committee dealing with this issue, etc.

C. INSTITUTIONAL REFORMS AND SELF-FINANCING

67. The January 2017 AU Assembly Decision, Assembly/AU/Dec.635(XXVIII), on the Institutional Reform of the African Union (AU) sets out a comprehensive AU reform agenda. It is aimed at fundamentally re-positioning the organization to meet the evolving needs of its Member States and the continent and identifies the following core reform priorities:

- i) Focus on key priorities with continental scope;
- ii) Realign African Union institutions in order to deliver against those priorities;
- iii) Connect the African Union to its citizens;
- iv) Manage the business of the African Union efficiently and effectively at both the political and operational levels;
- v) Finance the African Union sustainably and with the full ownership of the Member States.

68. The Assembly Decision on reform provides a framework for the transformation of the African Union into an effective and efficient organisation that delivers for African citizens. Based on this framework detailed implementation proposals are being developed.

69. The reform decision took into account previous reform proposals, most notably the 2007 Adedeji Audit, which made extensive and far-reaching recommendations on how to improve the overall effectiveness of the Union. Unfortunately, most of these were never implemented.

I. Mandate, Implementation Approach and Principles

70. Based on the previous implementation challenges, and the strategic importance of the reform agenda, the AU Assembly took the decision to oversee the reform process. The reform decision designated President Paul Kagame to supervise the implementation process. It was also determined that he would work with two other Heads of State, the 2016 Chair of the Union, President Idriss Deby, and the 2017 Chair of the Union, President Alpha Conde.

71. The Assembly also requested President Kagame to report on progress made in implementing Decision Assembly/AU/Dec.635 (XXIX) at each Ordinary Session of the Assembly.

72. During the January 2018 Summit, the AU Assembly decided that as part of the process of deepening consultations around the reform implementation process, the Reform Troika, should be expanded to the Bureau of the Assembly of the Union. The Assembly also decided to establish a group of fifteen (15) Ministers of Foreign Affairs, three per region to play an advisory role to the reform process

II. What Has Been Achieved to Date?

73. The November 2018 Extraordinary Summit on the AU reforms established a new structure for the senior leadership of the AU Commission along with a new process for the selection of the senior leadership of the AU Commission. The new selection process will be operationalised in 2020 in order to establish a new Commission in February 2021.

74. In order to develop the new selection modalities, the Assembly decided to establish a Panel of Eminent Africans, composed of five (5) eminent personalities, one per region, to oversee the pre-selection of candidatures of the senior leadership of the Commission.

75. Three regional nominations have been received. These are from the Central, Southern and Western Africa regions. The Committee of Permanent Representatives (PRC) met in November 2019 and determined that if no further regional nominations were received by mid-December 2019, the Panel should start its work.

76. The adoption of the new structure of the AU Commission. The November 2018 AU Extraordinary Assembly Decision, Ext/Assembly/AU/Dec.1-4(XI), on the Institutional Reform of the African Union (AU) in which the Assembly decided as

follows: MANDATES the Chairperson of the Commission to develop a new departmental structure that is lean and performance-oriented, taking into account the division of labour between the African Union, RECs and Regional Mechanisms, Member States and continental organisations.

77. Between March and April 2019, proposals for the restructuring of the Commission were developed with the support of an independent consulting firm. The proposals were submitted to Member States for their consideration in May 2019. Following initial deliberations, Member States decided the following: First, that the restructuring proposals should be budget neutral. If this is not possible that any additional cost should be financed from budget savings; second, to extend the period for the review of the structure to allow Member States to consult their capitals.

78. The Sub-committees of the Permanent Representatives Committee reviewed the proposed new structure and along with the proposed financing strategy in October and November 2019. The revised proposal was considered by the PRC in December 2019 with a view to presenting the new departmental structure for adoption in February 2020.

79. Third, within the framework of establishing a more effective division of labour between the AU and Regional Economic Communities, we intend to submit a draft Protocol on the relations between the AU and Regional Economic Communities along with and the Rules of Procedure for the Mid-Year Coordination Meeting for adoption by the Assembly during the next Summit. The Draft Protocol has recently been reviewed by the Specialised Technical Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs in November 2019.

80. The operationalization of the AU Peace Fund: During the 35th Ordinary Session of the Executive Council of the African Union held from 4 to 8 July 2019, the Executive Council reiterated that the AU Peace Fund should not be utilised until all the governance and management structures are fully operationalised and urged the Commission to conclude the process by February 2020. Good progress has been made. Since 2017, 50 Member States have contributed \$131m to the Peace Fund. The target is to reach \$400m in Member State contributions by 2021.

81. Strengthening the AU recruitment system: In November 2018, the Executive Council requested that the Commission work with a group of ten independent experts to review and improve the AU Recruitment and Selection System to institute a credible and robust recruitment and selection system. The experts started work in July 2019 and produced a very good inception report and work plan which was presented to Member States in September 2019 and they are working towards submitting their final report by December 2019. We are looking forward to solid recommendations emerging from this important process.

D. IMPLEMENTATION OF AGENDA 2063 FTYIP

I. The Roll Out of the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Framework for Agenda 2063

82. The Agenda 2063 FTYIP Monitoring and Evaluation Framework and its Core Indicators Handbook were disseminated to all Member States to guide in collecting data and on reporting progress on Agenda 2063. By the end of 2019, forty-two (42) Member States had benefited from technical support to enable them report on Agenda 2063. Seventeen (17) of them have already submitted data based reports on Agenda 2063.

83. The Commission and AUDA-NEPAD organized a continental workshop on an empirical methodology to guide national, regional and continental bodies to track and report on the implementation of Agenda 2063. The workshop brought together participants from forty (40) Member States and six (6) RECs, resulting in the preparation of country and REC-level progress reports on the implementation of Agenda 2063 for the period 2013 to 2019.

84. Ongoing support is being provided to Member States and RECs to complete, validate and submit their reports to the AU. These reports, including a performance dashboard, will be presented at a High-Level Forum on Agenda 2063 that will take place during the AU Summit in February 2020. Furthermore, AUDA-NEPAD and AUC will compile a continental-level report, which will be presented to the AU Assembly in February 2020 by H.E. Mr. Alassane Dramane Ouattara, President of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire and Champion of African Union Agenda 2063.

II. Mid-Term Review of the First Ten-Year Implementation Plan

85. The year 2019 marks five years since the adoption and execution of the First Ten-Year Implementation Plan of Agenda 2063 which runs from 2014 to 2023. It is, therefore, imperative that a review of the FTYIP is conducted to ascertain whether Africa is on the right track in the implementation process. This calls for a well-planned and articulated review exercise, which should involve all stakeholders. More precisely, the purpose of the review exercise is to assess the level of achievement in the implementation of all aspects of the FTYIP at Member States, RECs and AU Organs' levels. The outcome of the evaluation will result in:

- i) Modifications to the results framework;
- ii) strategies for deepening domestication and awareness of the Agenda at all levels;
- iii) Strategies for enhancing awareness and use of the Resource Mobilization and Partnership Strategy, and the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Framework, including the Core Indicators Handbook;
- iv) Prioritized and better categorized short, medium and long-term implementation horizons for the Agenda 2063 Flagship Projects;
- v) Measures for strengthening the implementation and coordination of the monitoring and evaluation of the FTYIP at the national (with UNDP), regional and continental levels.

86. In line with the Executive Council Decision EX.CL/Dec.1060 (XXXV), the Midterm Review Report is expected to be presented to the Executive Council Ordinary Session in July 2020. The process of procurement of an expert services is underway with Terms of Reference already approved by the Ambassadorial Committee on Agenda 2063.

III. Financing and Domestic Resource Mobilization for Agenda 2063

87. The Executive Council approved the Agenda 2063 Financing, Domestic Resource Mobilization (DRM) and Partnership Strategy in January 2018 and requested the Commission and the AfDB, in close collaboration with UNECA and AUDA to prepare an “Agenda 2063 Financing and DRM Roadmap and Guide” based on the “Adopted Agenda 2063 Financing, DRM and Partnership Strategy”.

88. Accordingly, in order to operationalize the DRM Strategy, a series of Joint Technical Meetings have been held with the concerned institutions, namely, AfDB, UNECA and AUDA to form a resource mobilization platform, which will spearhead this process. The DRM Technical Working Group (TWG) was officially launched on 8 October 2019, in Addis Ababa. The key outcomes of the meeting included, inter alia, the agreement on:

- i) Terms of Reference for the TWG and the division of labour amongst the member institutions; and
- ii) The roadmap for implementation including the technical approach and resource requirements for the exercise.

89. The Technical Working Group meeting also recognized the Joint Secretariat Support Office (JSSO) as a key structure to this process particularly for Secretariat role. Currently, a process is underway to engage a consultancy firm to develop the DRM “*Guide*” and implementation roadmap, expected to be finalized in 2020 for dissemination and domestication by Member States.

IV. Joint AU/UN Framework on the implementation of Agenda 2063 and SDGs

90. Following the agreement between the AU and UN on the Framework for a Renewed UN/AU Partnership on Africa’s Integration and Development Agendas (PAIDA) of March 2015, which is based on Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the two institutions have developed two joint instruments for the execution of PAIDA. These are the Joint United Nations-African Union Framework for an Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security and the African Union-United Nations Framework for the Implementation of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development signed on 19 April 2017 and 27 January 2018 respectively.

91. PAIDA has replaced the previous Framework for the Ten-Year Capacity Building Programme for the African Union (2006-2016). The responsibility to oversee its implementation was vested in the Regional Coordination Mechanism (RCM). Consultations are now underway between the AU and UN to review the RCM structure to take on the new responsibilities, through the joint leadership of the Commission, the Executive Secretary of UNECA and the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General to the AU.

V. Agenda 2063 Research Project on the implementation of the FTYIP

92. The African Union Agenda 2063 Research Project is coordinated by the College of Economic and Management Sciences at the University of South Africa in conjunction with the Commission. The project is dedicated towards specialized research and capacity development especially in the field of business, entrepreneurship and enterprises for youth and women (e.g. renewable energies, solar, water technologies).

93. In accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed between the Commission and the University of South Africa in 2014, work continues on the six research projects identified, namely:

- i) Agricultural production efficiency in Africa: Prospects for high growth strategies in food security commodities;
- ii) Harnessing economic and political verities in the development and implementation of appropriate youth employment policies;
- iii) Renewable Energy and Economic Growth in the SADC Region;
- iv) Exploring the prospects of Human Settlements in a regionally integrated Africa;
- v) Advancing Productive Transformation in Africa: Assessing and monitoring justice practices in the workplace for decent employment;
- vi) Millennial Women Entrepreneurs: Opportunities and Challenges in Africa.

94. In addition to the six research projects, the Commission and UNISA are organizing AU-UNISA 2020 conference under the theme “Silencing Guns by 2020: Creating Conducive Conditions for Africa’s Development” to cover various thematic areas with focus on priorities of Agenda 2063 and its FTYIP.

VI. Revitalization of the Ministerial Committee on Agenda 2063

95. In line with its mandate as outlined in the Executive Council Decision EX.CL/Dec.998(XXXII) of January 2018, the Ministerial Committee on Agenda 2063 has undertaken a wide range of activities, which basically cover monitoring all aspects of the implementation of Agenda 2063, including domesticating Agenda 2063, aligning annual AU themes with the Agenda 2063 Flagship Projects and making follow-up on the execution of the latter. It met in March 2019 in Gaborone, Botswana, under the Chairmanship of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Botswana. It took stock of the implementation of Agenda 2063 with particular focus on the progress made in the domestication of the Agenda, monitoring and evaluation, progress in Flagship Projects as well as recommending the AU Theme of the Year 2020, which was agreed to be on silencing the Guns. In order to enhance the performance of the Ministerial Committee on Agenda 2063 and to drive its effective implementation, the ongoing AU institutional reform would establish a relevant structure within the Commission to support its activities.

E. IMPLEMENTATION OF DECISIONS OF THE POLICY ORGANS

96. The Commission wishes to draw attention that, during the period under review, the Commission implemented fifty-five (55) of the ninety-seven decisions (56.7%). It should be pointed out that this activity is a joint activity for both the Commission and Member States as most of the decisions are expected to be implemented by the latter. To facilitate this exercise, the Commission has addressed a questionnaire seeking information about Member States' implementation activities. Unfortunately, only three Member States, namely, Mali, Mauritius and Morocco have responded so far. Other Member States are once more called upon to give a feedback to the Commission.

I. Legal Instruments adopted

97. During the reporting period, the following Legal Instruments were adopted by the Policy Organs:

- i) Treaty for the establishment of the African Medicines Agency;
- ii) Statute of the African Audio Visual and Cinema Commission;
- iii) Statute of the African Union International Centre for Girls' and Women's Education in Africa (AU/CIEFFA);
- iv) African Union Transitional Justice Policy; Rules of Procedure of the Specialized Technical Committee on Finance, Monetary Affairs, Economic Planning and Integration and Draft Legal Instruments for the AUDA/NEPAD;
- v) The Assembly also adopted an amendment to Article 35 of the Charter for African Cultural Renaissance.

98. Upon standing instructions of the Executive Council, the Commission embarked, during 2019, on the harmonization of the texts of the treaties in all the working languages so as to expedite the process of review of OAU/AU Treaties and enable Member States to accelerate the process of ratification/accession to these Treaties. Certified copies of those harmonized Treaties are now readily available to the Member States for their appropriate action in the facilitation of the ratification process.

II. Signature and Ratification/Accession of OAU/AU Treaties

99. In line with previous decisions of the Executive Council regarding the signing of treaties by Member States, the Commission has taken measures to ensure that signing of treaties takes place at all future ordinary sessions of the Assembly, making the treaties available for their signature during the 32nd Ordinary Session of the Assembly in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in February 2019, the 12th Extra-ordinary Session of the Assembly and the First Mid-Year Coordination Meeting between the African Union, Regional Economic Communities in Niamey, Niger in July 2019. Following the Summit signature campaigns, eleven (11) signatures and six (6) ratifications were registered. As November 2019, the Commission has registered a total of thirty-three (33) signatures and fifty-three (53) instruments of ratification / accession.

100. The signatures are significant in that they signify Member States' commitment

to particular treaties and Member States' obligation to refrain from acts which would defeat the object and purpose of the treaty. It is hoped that treaties ratified will be domesticated and implemented by Member States, consequently advancing the socio-economic and political integration of the continent and improving lives of the African people, in line with the aspirations of Agenda 2063. It will be recalled that, in order to facilitate treaties signature and ratification, the Executive Council has established an AU Law week and Treaty Signature month, which was later on extended to the whole month of December of each year.

101. Further, the Commission intends to publish a Treaties Book in all the four (4) AU Working languages as a compilation of OAU/AU treaties from 1963 to 2014 intended to popularize the treaties and to facilitate easy access by different stakeholders. Through the technical assistance from UNDP and funding from Swedish Government, the Commission is upgrading the AU Treaties Webpage to have more relevant, interactive and updated information. This is scheduled to be launched during the February 2020 Summit.

F. DELIVERING ON CONTINENTAL FRAMEWORKS AND MANDATES

I. Economic Transformation, Inclusive Growth, Poverty Reduction

a. Economic Transformation

102. Since the beginning of the Twenty-First Century, Africa has ranked second behind Asia on the leader board of the world's fastest-growing regions, with average annual growth in gross domestic product (GDP) of 4.7% since 2000. However, the level of growth has been insufficient to trigger fundamental changes on the continent urging the Commission to take various initiatives:

- ***2019 Africa's Development Dynamics Report (ADD) on "Achieving Productive Transformation"***

103. Following the success of the first edition of ADD launched in 2018 that focused on "growth, jobs and inequalities", and in continued, collaboration with the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Center, the second edition of the ADD has been issued in 2019. It focuses on "*Achieving Productive Transformation*" and coincides with the launching of the AfCFTA. Within this context, a key question is to know whether African firms can upscale and deliver in the competitive landscape to fuel economic development, create jobs, fight poverty and advance prosperity, thus realizing the continent's production transformation and Agenda 2063 Goals. The second ADD emphasizes the need for Africa to accelerate its productive transformation to create quality jobs, grow their businesses from lagging to leading firms producing more and better products in order to compete in the upcoming new open market of the AfCFTA.

104. A strong push is crucial to boost (i) firms' internal capabilities to innovate, upgrade or switch to new business models; (ii) combining with existing capabilities

inside the economy and regional production networks, and (iii) exporters' abilities to survive, as quality services in general need to be at the centre of public policies and market priorities. African policy makers need to support local firms in improving proprietary, industrial and commercial performances.

105. There is also need for governments to concentrate their resources, they should prioritize business services for firms that cluster with and around each other. Clusters enable governments with constrained resources to make the most of their assets by investing in a targeted place. This is especially effective if governments provide business services to improve specialisation, linkages and skills. At the same time, clusters need to tap into regional production networks. Policies can reduce the uncertainties of accessing new markets. The most competitive firms must embrace greater trade with intra-African and global markets to deliver for growing demand. Designing and implementing policies in these three areas are key for jumpstarting and encouraging actions that will allow Africa's firms to compete in AfCFTA and beyond.

- ***Domestic Resource Mobilization: Fighting against Corruption and Illicit Financial Flows (IFFs)***

106. In addition to the 2019 ADD, a new report titled "*Domestic Resource Mobilization: Fighting against Corruption and Illicit Financial Flows (IFFs)*" has been produced. This publication contributes to the Commission's efforts to raise awareness on the impact of Corruption and Illicit Financial Flows on the continent. Although it is difficult to quantify the amounts loss due to IFF and Corruption, statistics estimate that between 50 and 80 billion USD are lost annually, and these figures seem to be on an upward trajectory. This amount is higher than the annual Official Development Assistance (ODA) that the continent receives.

107. Addressing the issue of corruption and IFFs has been a priority area for the AU for quite some time leading to many initiatives, including the theme for the year 2018 to be "*Winning the Fight against Corruption: A Sustainable Path to Africa's Transformation*". This publication, therefore, comprises analytical perspectives on the issue of corruption and IFFs; and country cases across the continent with specific actions that are being taken by Member States, to mobilize domestic resources and fight against corruption and IFFs. It includes case studies of various countries where governments, state institutions, judiciary, private sector and civil society have demonstrated advancement in the fight against corruption and IFFs.

108. The domestic resource mobilization part of the report is key to establishing a long-term path to sustainable development financing. Its recommendations include: taxation; savings mobilization and financial inclusion; and curbing IFFs. The domestic resource mobilization can be enhanced through improvement of the efficiency of existing tax systems by taking profit of opportunities abounding from digitalization and transparency initiatives, the optimization of tax incentives, the rationalization of tax exemptions, the expansion of the tax base, the implementation of specialized taxes as well as the establishment of solid domestic institutions and policy frameworks.

- b. **Private Sector Development**

109. Notwithstanding the challenges facing Africa's private sector such as small size

and informality, weak linkages, low level of competitiveness, and limited innovations, the opportunities for Africa's private sector are immense and it remains a key component towards achieving economic transformation and deepening of Africa's integration agenda. Africa's private sector has the potential to be part of global value chains and benefit from the much needed technology through joint ventures and other forms of partnerships with other private sector actors from other parts of the world.

110. The Commission organized the eleventh edition of the African Union Private Sector Forum from 6 to 8 November 2019 in Antananarivo, Madagascar. The forum was held under the theme: "*Transforming African Economies through Mobilization of the private sector and capitalization on experiences from other regions of the world*". In the final Declaration, the Forum mainly focused and had vibrant discussions around the areas of finance and investment, agribusiness, mining industry, digital technologies, tourism, human capital development and entrepreneurship for women and youth entrepreneurs.

111. The Commission also drafted the African Union Private Sector Development Strategy 2016-2020. This is a concrete step towards enhancing private sector capacity to be part of the global value chains so as to enable it contribute towards the attainment of Agenda 2063 for inclusive and sustainable growth in Africa.

112. The Commission continues to be actively involved in the organization of private sector development initiatives with the aim to promote cooperation and coordination amongst different stakeholders such as public and private sector dialogues and hold high level business fora with development partners such as Africa-EU Business Forum, Turkey-Africa Economic Forum and Africa-Arab Business Forum among others.

113. Further, the Commission is working on enhancing the capacity building for African youth and women entrepreneurs through targeted training and mentorship programs with new innovative ideas and skills to improve their way of doing business. Through such platforms, the Commission has worked closely with Member States private sector representatives and other relevant stakeholders in developing and implementing relevant policies in business, regulatory reforms including the Pan-African Investment Code (PAIC), as requested by the STC on Trade, Industry and Minerals to include PAIC as a reference framework document on the investment chapter in the AfCFTA.

- **Annual African Private Sector Forum**

114. In view of the critical role that the private sector is expected to play in the development and integration of the African economies, in particular its contribution to poverty reduction through investment and employment creation, the Commission organizes an annual African Private Sector Forum, in line with the relevant decision Executive Council of January 2005 in Abuja, Nigeria, which institutionalized the African Union Private Sector Forum. The Forum is a key instrument of interface and partnership between the African Union policy makers and the private sector and acts as a vehicle for empowering the African private sector through advocacy, sharing business and market information and skills required in the implementation of the AU Strategies. The Commission has to date organized eleventh editions of the African

Private Sector Forum.

- ***EU-Africa Business Forum***

115. The African Union and the European Union institutionalized the EU-Africa Business Forum (EABF) in 2006 as part of efforts to improve the environment for business and increase investment in Africa. The Forum, held alternately between Africa and Europe aims, among others, at:

- i) Influencing improvements and attracting the business and investment climate in Africa through enhanced governance, capacity building and policy coherence;
- ii) Giving a voice to the private sector to engage in direct dialogue with the AU Commission and the European Commission, which maintain a permanent dialogue with the African Governments and regional organizations; and
- iii) Making Africa more attractive to the European private sector by providing a more accurate and positive image of the continent as a place for business and investment.

116. Cognizant that the private sector is a critical partner for achieving the objectives of the Joint Africa-EU Strategy (JAES) and the MDGs, the Forum is a high level platform to engage with political leaders in a concrete and constructive dialogue where parties involved hold each other accountable. The Commission, in partnership with the European Commission, will continue organizing the Forum which provides a unique opportunity for African and European companies to network and exchange views and enhance Africa-EU business and investment relations in changing environment.

- ***African Inclusive Markets Excellence Centre (AIMEC)***

117. The Executive Council held from 25 to 26 January 2018, in Addis Ababa, decided, among other things, decided on the establishment of the African Inclusive Market Excellence Center (AIMEC) and requested the Commission to submit the relevant structural, financial and legal implications, in line with the AU rules and procedures. It also requested the Commission to ensure that the selection of the Member State to host AIMEC is carried out in conformity with the laid down criteria.

118. Pursuant to the said Decision, the Commission in 2019 contacted Member States interested to host the Center. The Member States, which offered to host the Center were Benin and Tunisia. An assessment team will be dispatched to discuss with the relevant authorities to evaluate the facilities which the proposed host countries are putting forward with regard to hosting the Center in line with the AU selection criteria.

c. **Hubs for Industrialization/Manufacturing**

119. As Economic Zones are becoming the most popular instrument for developing economies in emergent countries, the Commission is working towards developing a Continental Special Economic Zone (SEZ) Framework benchmarked on international best practice to guide Member States in their design and implementation of related

policies. This aims at maximizing benefits from this strategic industrial policy instrument that has been significant in delivering structural transformation in East Asia.

120. In this regard, on 21 November 2019, the Commission supported the Africa Free Zones Organisation (AFZO) 4th Annual Meeting, under the theme “*Economic Zones - Accelerator for Industrialization in Africa*”, on the margins of the Africa Industrialization Week 2019. AFZO brings together leading African Economic Zones and institutions in charge of development, management and promotion of the zones on the continent. Several participants from 60 Economic Zones in Africa and international institutions such as UNCTAD, UNIDO, UNECA, and AfDB shared their expertise on challenges and effective means to enhance economic zones development in Africa.

- ***Accelerated Industrial Development for Africa (AIDA)***

121. The Accelerated Industrial Development for Africa (AIDA), which was adopted by the Assembly in 2008 in an effort to drive the development and integration of industrialization in national development policies and strategies has continued to be pursued by the Commission. In this regard, it has undertaken a study on financing the industrialization drive. Furthermore, the promotion of regional value chain development initiatives, and cross border investment initiatives have received prominence during 2019, as a strategic model to de-risk investment and promote inter and intra-industry trade on the continent. Regional Value Chain development is also envisaged to significantly improve Africa’s investment mobilisation prospects, whilst at the same time fostering balanced, inclusive and sustainable industrialisation.

- ***Small and Medium Size Enterprises (SME) Strategy***

122. Following the recommendation by the Second STC on Trade, Industry and Minerals (STC-TIM), in February 2019, the Assembly adopted the AU Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) Strategy. The SME strategy comes at a critical time when the Africa Continental Free Trade Area has entered its operational phase. The Strategy is expected to guide the continent in the development of competitive, diversified and sustainable economies underpinned by dynamic, entrepreneurial and industrial sectors that generate employment, reduce poverty and foster social inclusion. The Commission is currently working on the establishment of an Implementation Coordination Unit and the institutionalization of an annual African Union Forum for SMEs, as recommended by the Second STC-TIM.

- ***Enterprise Africa Network***

123. During the period under review, the Commission finalized the feasibility study on “*Enterprise Africa Network*” (EAN) to facilitate the establishment of a “*Pool of competitive SMEs*” in Africa. SMEs at different stages will receive support from another “*Pool of accredited Business Development Services organisations*” to build their capacity in order to position them to access markets.

124. The core of EAN will be made up of the Commission and RECs while the privileged partners will consist of regional and continental Business Associations and Business Development Solution Organizations. Sustainable collaborations will be

established with experienced international organisations on entrepreneurship development on trade information portal and on market intelligence information. EAN is expected to be an answer to accelerating Africa's development prospects, considering its projected economic growth, a large population of innovative women and youth entrepreneurs. The Commission is working on the development of a Resource Mobilization Strategy, framework and partnership agreements with donors interested in EAN.

- ***Fashion Value Chain Development***

125. The value of the global Fashion Industry (Clothing, footwear, accessories, jewellery and cosmetics) is around \$2.4 trillion, with an annual growth of 5.5%. Africa accounts for a marginal share of this value, at less than 5%, while Asia and the USA share equally 80% of the market. This value is estimated at \$3 billion where 90% of the players are SMEs. Against this background, the Second STC-TIM held in January 2019, urged the Commission to develop a program of work on the Presidential Fashion Initiative as a step for the promotion of the African Fashion Value Chain and as a tool for employment and wealth creation in African economies.

126. Accordingly, the Commission undertook a series of activities, including the establishment of an expert working group, panel discussions on the margin of the 32nd Summit, AfCFTA Business Forum 2019 and the African Industrialization Week 2019. During the discussions, challenges and opportunities facing Africa SMEs in the fashion sector were debated and attention was drawn to new potential growth areas in order to showcase manufacturing opportunities.

- ***Africa Industrialization Week***

127. In the framework of the Africa Industrialization Day 2019 on 20 November, which was graced by H.E. Sahle-Work Zewde, President of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, and several Member State's Ministers and high level dignitaries, the Commission also commemorated the 30th Edition of Africa Industrialization Week (AIW2019) in Addis Ababa from 18 to 22 November 2019 under the theme "*Positioning African Industry to Supply the AfCFTA Market*". The programme aimed at mobilizing the commitment of African countries and the international community towards the industrialization of Africa and providing an opportunity to key stakeholders to reflect on Africa's industrialization. The event was co-organized by a number of partners including: The Ethiopian Government (Ministry of Trade and Industry), the International Trade Center (ITC); the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the United Nations Conference for Trade and Development; the Korea-Africa Foundation and the African Free Zones Organizations with a wide range of activities attracting 1500 participants from various sectors.

- ***Quality Infrastructure***

128. Taking note of the rapidly unfolding Africa integration developments, particularly with respect to the AfCFTA, and recognising the importance of underpinning Africa's industrial development with sound standards and quality principles, the Commission initiated the development of an Africa Quality Policy (AQP), working closely with Member States and RECs. The AQP provides guidance

for the development and sustainability of a robust quality infrastructure for the continent closely aligned and linked to national and REC level quality policies. The draft AQP document, which is now under RECs scrutiny, will be submitted for consideration and adoption by the STC-MIT in 2020. It is also expected that the quality policy will be instrumental in enabling AfCFTA State Parties to address challenges related to sanitary and phytosanitary measures, technical and non-tariff barriers to trade in general. The remaining Services Sectors and the Regulatory Cooperation Frameworks will be finalized by June 2020.

d. **Africa Mining Vision (AMV)**

129. The Africa Mining Vision (AMV), adopted by the Assembly in 2009, recognises that the mineral sector in Africa provides a plethora of potential upstream, downstream, and side stream linkages with higher-value industrial and services activities. It is through value chains that countries and regions will be in a better position to insert themselves into the higher value activities and connect their endowments with sectors of the future. The Commission has therefore continued to support Member States, RECS and other Stakeholder in domesticating the tenets of the AMV. Some of the key interventions include:

- i) Supporting efforts by RECs in the development of regional mineral value chains for industrial development. Work is on-going in SADC, EAC and ECOWAS;
- ii) Finalizing the drafting of the first ever African Mineral and Energy Resource Classification System which will be a universally acceptable and internationally applicable scheme for the classification, management and reporting mineral, petroleum, renewable energy, anthropogenic resources and injection projects;
- iii) Developing an Artisanal and Small Scale Mining Financial Inclusion Strategy which is aimed at contributing to Member States' economic transformation and sustainable development by strengthening legal and regulatory frameworks to promote financial inclusion mechanisms and services to the ASM sector;
- iv) Finalizing the drafting of a Model Law for mineral fiscal policy and regulations to act as a guide to Member States in reviewing Mineral regimes in line with the principles of the AMV.

130. After the adoption by Assembly in January 2016 of the Statutes establishing the African Minerals Development Center (AMDC) as a Specialized Agency of the African Union, the Assembly further decided in July 2018 that the AMDC Secretariat be hosted by Guinea. It also directed that the AMDC Secretariat move to the Commission by the end of September 2018 for the interim period of not more than one (1) year to allow the finalization of the Hosting Agreement, setting up the Governance Structure as well as the ratification process.

131. Consequently, the AMDC was officially handed over to the Commission on 15 February 2019, as part of fulfilling the relevant policy organs decisions. To facilitate a seamless transition process, in preparation for the official move to the Republic of Guinea as a Specialised Agency of the African Union, the Commission continued to negotiate the AMDC Hosting Agreement and assess the premises to house the AMDC Secretariat. The Commission has also established a joint lobbying mechanism to motivate Member States to sign and ratify AMDC Statutes. Currently six (6) countries have signed and three have ratified the Statutes. Finally, the Commission is finalizing

the development of AMDC Business Plan which provides a clear vision (as part of AMDC organizational strategy), including assessment of human resources, actionable programmatic activities, financial projections and modelling and a framework for mobilizing financial resources.

e. **Customs Cooperation and Trade Facilitation**

132. In the area of customs cooperation and trade facilitation, the Commission continued to facilitate and coordinate the different workshops and meetings as directed by the Subcommittee of Directors General of Customs (AUSCDGC) and implement the recommendations of the 11th Ordinary Meeting of the Subcommittee of Directors General of Customs held in September 2019. The top most priority of the Commission in the area of Customs Cooperation for 2019 was the development of the AU Trade Facilitation Strategy in line with international instruments and best practices such as the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement and the World Customs Organization Revised Kyoto Convention and its adoption by the AU Organs. This initiative will generate closeness in developing similar policies that will, as much as possible be implemented by each country and RECs using their existing initiatives, while in on inputs from one another.

133. The Draft AU Trade Facilitation Strategy was noted by the 2nd STC Meeting on Trade, Industry and Minerals in January 2019, and the STC recommended that a joint meeting between the AU Sub-Committee of the Directors General of Customs and the AfCFTA Sub-Committee of Trade Facilitation, Customs Cooperation and Transit be convened to finalize the Trade Facilitation Strategy and its Implementation Modalities before its consideration and adoption by its next meeting. The Strategy is currently being finalized for subsequent presentation to the joint meeting mentioned as above. The Commission continued with the spirit of promoting trade facilitation by organizing the 4th Customs Experts Trade Facilitation Forum in August 2019 in Accra, Ghana under the theme, “*Implementing Single Window Systems for Improved Trade Facilitation in Africa*”.

134. Finally, the Commission organized the 11th Sub-Committee of Directors General of Customs meeting that was held from 16 to 20 September 2019 in Kampala, Uganda. The objectives was to reflect and exchange views on the theme “*The Entry into Force of the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) -Implications to African Customs Administrations*” and to review the work done by the various Customs Technical Working Groups for the period November 2018 to September 2019, in addressing the issues in the Trade Facilitation Cluster of the Action Plan on Boosting Intra-African Trade (BIAT).

II. **Agricultural Productivity and Production: Implementation of CAADP**

a. **Supporting Countries and Regional Systems**

135. The fifteen (15) Member States of ECOWAS have been supported in the process of developing Malabo-compliant National Agricultural Investment Plans (NAIPs). Eight others from Southern and Central Africa are also receiving analytical support to develop their NAIPs. In May 2019, AUC-AUDA carried out an Independent

Technical Review of the Agriculture Sector Growth and Transformation Strategy of Kenya. The exercise was meant to ensure that every possible action has been accounted for to realize the objectives and targets laid out in the Strategy and defined in the CAADP/Malabo Agenda. In order to support Member States and RECs in identification of priority value chains as part of the Malabo Domestication process, the Commission, in partnership with UNECA, has developed draft Guidelines on Regional Agricultural Value Chain Development, which was endorsed by the 3rd STC in October 2019. In the same vein, Country Agribusiness Partnership Framework (CAPF) was established to assist Member States in the domestication of Malabo commitments and boosting private sector participation in Africa's agricultural transformation.

136. Under the AU-EU Partnership, the Political Declaration of the 3rd Conference of Ministers of Agriculture that took place in June 2019 in Rome, Italy, committed to building a critical mass of socio-economic modelling capacity among Member States so as to enhance agricultural transformation through sharing evidence, critical knowledge, experiences, methodologies and approaches in sustainable agriculture. To this end, the Pan-Africa Network for Economic Analysis Policies (PANAP) was launched. So far, seven Member States, namely: Kenya, Ethiopia, Côte d'Ivoire, Niger, Senegal, Tanzania and Togo have benefitted from its activities.

b. **Enhancing Food Security and Nutrition through Accelerated Implementation of the Declaration on Hunger Free Africa by 2025**

137. The Commission organized a workshop to mobilize partners support in May 2019 in Addis Ababa. Following the launch of the continental Framework for Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization in Africa in October 2019, an action plan for its implementation was drafted. On the 15th October 2019, in Bobo-Dioulasso, Burkina Faso, the Commission brought together Governments, UN agencies, private sector, civil society, women leaders of the rural world, and other partners in the agricultural value chain to inaugurate the first monument symbolizing the campaign to banish the hand-held hoe to the museum. It was a response to the call made by Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, former Chairperson of the AU Commission, on relegating the hand-held hoe to the museum at the Johannesburg Summit in June 2015. This is part of the support to Member States to develop and implement their national agricultural mechanization strategies towards boosting agricultural productivity and enhance food security. Likewise, the Commission has set up a Task Force to review progress on the 2006 Abuja Declaration on Fertilizer for the African Green Revolution, and to prepare for a follow up Summit in 2020 on Fertilizer and Soil Health.

138. In the effort to achieve the commitment to ending hunger by 2025, by cutting down stunting to 10 percent and underweight to 5 percent, the Commission is pushing for accelerating and scaling up the implementation of nutrition sensitive agriculture strategies through bio fortification, industrial food fortification and increased production, market access and consumption of the diversified and nutrient-dense crops. In a bid to encourage Member States to align with a common policy, vision and priorities, the Commission has drafted a "*Declaration on Upscaling Biofortification and Food Fortification in Africa*", which has recently been adopted by the Third STC on Agriculture, Rural Development, Water and Environment (ARDWE) for the endorsement of the Assembly in February 2020.

139. Regarding international instruments, a notable milestone has been realized during 2019 in the mobilization and engagement of Member States to build consensus on the negotiations on the agreement to enhance the functioning of the Multilateral System of Access and Benefit-sharing of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture. Additionally, the Commission facilitated the process with technical backstopping in the development of a range of measures that will increase user-based payments and contributions to the Benefit-sharing Fund in a sustainable and predictable long-term manner. On seed quality assurance, negotiations have reached the final stage with Kenya Plant Health Inspectorate, the Centre of Phytosanitary Excellence, to operationalize the Forum for African Seed Testing (FAST). This is key in improving access to quality seed for small scale farmers on the continent as well as adherence to international standards espoused in the International Seed Testing Association guidelines.

140. On Water Governance, collaboration has been harnessed at global and continental level to advocate for adaptation of agricultural and food systems to mitigate the impacts of water scarcity and climate change in order to avert food and water insecurity. As a member of the Working Group of the Global Framework on Water Scarcity in Agriculture (WASAG), the Commission joined other partners to hold events at the World Water Week to share the commitments of the first WASAG International Forum that was held in Cabo Verde in March 2019. The events focused on practical, collaborative and innovative solutions and tools, including the WASAG Investment Framework to facilitate greater access by all to finance for agriculture water projects in the context of climate change.

- ***On Sanitary and Phytosanitary Standards (SPS)***

141. In support to the implementation of the Annex 7 of the AfCFTA Agreement, the Commission developed a continental SPS policy framework that was endorsed by the 3rd STC on ARDWE. This policy framework will support Member States to work together towards a modern, coherent, and integrated SPS system supportive of food security, shared prosperity, and health for all Africans.

142. The Commission co-organized with the EU, the 3rd AU-EU Ministers of Agriculture Conference in Rome on 21 June 2019 under the theme '*Promoting sustainable regional agri-food value chains*'. At the end of the conference, a political Declaration and Agenda Action were signed, which will guide the AU-EU cooperation in agriculture over the next two years.

- c. **Strengthening Mutual Accountability and Biennial Review Process**

143. Following the submission of the Inaugural Biennial Review (BR) Report to the Assembly in 2018, the Commission and AUDA-NEPAD formed a BR Task Force. The aim was to constructively critique the BR process, indicators, and methods - including the scorecard weighting system - with the goal of improving subsequent BRs. Eight (8) Technical Working Groups (TWGs), including technical experts from various institutions, were formed and organized around the performance areas of the Malabo Declaration.

144. A new Web-based Data Entry and Management Tool called the electronic

biennial review (e-BR) was established as a brand-new feature of the 2019 BR process. Similarly, the BR Task Force on Communications, in collaboration with different partners, developed the “CAADP Malabo Biennial Review Dashboard: 2019 Highlight Indicators” to provide to the policy organs a snapshot of twenty-two highlighted indicators from the 2019 report. The Task Force partners also created the Interactive CAADP Biennial Review Toolkit, a dynamic online resource to allow diverse users to navigate the results of the BR. The Commission and AUDA-NEPAD organized a peer-to-peer experience sharing and learning platform for national CAADP BR focal persons. The event offered a platform for CAADP BR focal persons to exchange on their national BR experiences and review the 2019 BR reporting roadmap, including 2019 BR technical guidelines, methodologies, and country reporting template. Following all these joint efforts, the second BR report, including 22 indicators, was adopted by the 3rd STC in October 2019.

- ***Policy Framework and Reform Strategy for Fisheries and Aquaculture in Africa (PFRS)***

145. The PFRS was formulated with the purpose of facilitating coherent policy development for the sustainable management of fisheries and aquaculture resources in AU Member States. The African Fisheries Reform Mechanism (AFRM) established in 2014 to coordinate implementation of the PFRS, was reviewed and endorsed by the 3rd STC on Agriculture, Rural Development, Water and Environment convened from 21 to 25 October 2019 in Addis Ababa. Also endorsed by the STC was Africa’s Blue Economy framework developed to midwife an inclusive and sustainable blue economy that has great potential and a significant contributor to continental transformation and growth. The blue print covers 5 thematic areas that are critical vector for Sustainable Blue Economic Growth. They are: fisheries, aquaculture, conservation and sustainable aquatic ecosystems; shipping/transportation, trade, ports, maritime security, safety and enforcement; coastal and maritime tourism, climate change, resilience, environment, infrastructure; sustainable energy and mineral resources and innovative industries; and policies, institutional and governance, employment, job creation and poverty eradication, and innovative financing.

- ***Sustainable Utilization, Management and Conservation of Animal Resources and their Ecosystems***

146. Five (5) regional gene banks (covering all AU regions) for the sustainable conservation of Animal Genetic Resources (AnGR) in all AU Member States, were equipped and officially handed over to the respective regions. These gene banks will provide cryo-conservation facilities for African AnGR. The Animal Genetic Resources Characterization, Inventory and Monitoring (AnGR-CIM) tool and the African Animal Genetic Resources Information System (AAGRIS), a module of the Animal Resources Information System version 3 (ARIS 3) were officially launched.

- ***Veterinary Governance and Animal Health Systems***

147. The Commission finalized the development of the Animal Health Strategy for Africa (AHSA) aimed at enhancing the contribution of the animal resources sector to livelihoods and improvement of public health through enhanced veterinary service delivery. AHSA was endorsed by the 3rd STC on ARDWE in October 2019, Addis

Ababa, alongside the African Union Framework on Antimicrobial Resistance Control 2020 - 2025. The latter seeks to improve surveillance of Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) organisms among humans, animals, and plants; delay emergence and limit transmission; and mitigate harm among patients infected with AMR organisms.

148. With regard to the development and dissemination of African Common Positions on various areas of Animal Health and Trade in Animals and Animal products; 10 out of 12 Common Positions on priority animal health standards developed through an AU Commission supported process. They were accepted by the 87th General Session of the OIE (World Organization for Animal Health) in May 2019, in Paris. 16 out of the 18 Common Positions on priority food safety standards developed through the support of the Commission were accepted by the 42nd Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC), in July 2019, in Geneva. In addition, 23 experts from various Member States and RECs were supported to participate in the sessions of OIE, CAC and the WTO SPS Committee to present various Common Positions and Trade Concerns.

- ***Pan African Vaccine Center (PANVAC)***

149. As part of its certification of veterinary vaccines, the AU-PANVAC has received a total of 450 vaccines and biologicals for testing, 72% of which were from Africa. Biologicals tested included diluent, and vaccine production starting materials such as sera, vaccine seeds and cells. Moreover, the Centre has recently validated a new test for Contagious Caprine Pleuropneumonia (CCPP). To support vaccine producing laboratories, biologicals reagents such as cells, vaccine seeds and sera as well as ten Peste des Petits Ruminants ELISA kits for antibodies detection were distributed to AU Member States laboratories upon request.

150. Since its inauguration in January 2018, the Rinderpest holding facilities for Africa, a total of 9590 vials of Rinderpest Emergency vaccines amounting to 959000 doses were recently transferred to the custody of AU-PANVAC by the National Veterinary Institute (NVI) of Ethiopia. It brings up the total number of doses of Rinderpest Emergency vaccines at the AU Continental Vaccine Bank to 2, 470, 400 doses. The vaccines were re-certified by the Pirbright Institute and were found to be still potent. The restocking of the Continental Vaccine Bank with 10 million doses of new Batches of vaccines is expected soon.

151. Besides, the Centre has organized the 4th AU-PANVAC Steering Committee meeting in July 2019, South Africa; workshop on intensification of Newcastle disease control technology for enhancement of village chicken production, in October 2019, Nigeria; Veterinary Vaccine Regulatory Harmonization Meeting for Continental Free Trade” in November 2019 in Nairobi; and PPR cross-border harmonisation workshop for countries in the Lake Chad region, in December 2019, in Cameroon. In its various activities, AU-PANVAC has worked in collaboration with a number of partners, including Pirbright Institute, United Kingdom Defence and Threat Reduction Agency, USA; KYEEMA foundation, Australia; Abu Dhabi Food control authority on capacity building for vaccine and diagnostic reagent production that indicated a possibility to produce vaccines in Africa for the UAE; and OIE (World Organization for Animal Health) on sustainable laboratories and innovation in Paris.

- ***Pan-African Tsetse and Trypanosomiasis Eradication Campaign (PATTEC)***

152. In its ongoing efforts to eliminate the burden of tsetse and trypanosomiasis on the African continent, AU-PATTEC continued to take a leading role in initiating, organizing, supporting and coordinating the campaign for the progressive creation of Tsetse and Trypanosomiasis (T&T) free areas. Towards that direction, it embarked on training fourteen national PATTEC Coordinators from various Member States in skills and knowledge on principles of Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK); and twenty-three others in the application of open source Geographical Information System technology in T&T projects.

153. Monitoring and evaluation missions on the status of implementation of the PATTEC initiative were undertaken to Zambia (10-14 June 2019), Ghana (30 July – 2 August) and Kenya (9-12 September 2019). One of the key outputs of the missions is the endorsement by the countries visited to integrate T&T programmes in their formative rural development initiatives. Recognizing the key role of RECs in accelerating regional integration of T&T interventions and in mobilizing the required resources, AU-PATTEC undertook to deepen engagements with them. During the period under review, consultative meetings were held with EAC (4-6 March 2019) and SADC (7-9 August 2019) to support them in developing regional project proposals and to enhance ownership, coordination and sustainability of T&T programmes at regional levels.

154. AU-PATTEC recognizes the transformative power of partnerships in efforts designed to reduce T&T burden. To this effect, PATTEC undertook a number of joint activities regarding T&T control, notably with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) which supported PATTEC to develop a communication strategy for resource mobilization, World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) and WHO. AU-PATTEC also engaged with a wide range of stakeholders through a consultative meeting to develop a roadmap for updating the tsetse distribution map. In collaboration with an NGO called PATH, in April 2019, AU-PATTEC supported DRC to develop its advocacy strategy for the elimination of human sleeping sickness in that country.

- ***Enhanced Resilience of Production Systems to Climate Change and Improved Agricultural Risk Management***

155. With the recognition that Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA) can enhance production and productivity and thereby achieve food security and build resilience and adaptation to climate change, the Commission assisted 9 Member States (Botswana, Cameroon, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia) to prepare project Concept Notes for submission to Green Climate Fund (GCF) for support to scale up CSA. As countries are at different stages of preparing the Concept Notes, so far, GCF has reviewed and accepted the submissions by 3 Member States (Botswana, Kenya and Tanzania). Furthermore, support has been provided to eight (8) countries (Angola, Botswana, Eswatini, Gabon, Lesotho, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe) to mainstream resilience to climate change in the process of developing their respective National Agriculture Investment Plan (NAIP).

156. In order for agriculture to feature at the United Nations Convention on Climate

Change (UNFCCC) negotiations and benefit from climate financing mechanisms, the African Group of Negotiators Expert Support (AGNES) on Agriculture has also been supported to convene its Pre-COP consultative and strategic meetings. Technical papers that capture the specific feature of African agriculture and its need for adaptation measures and at the same time respond to the roadmap of the Koronivia Joint Work on Agriculture (KJWA) were commissioned and the findings informed the submissions of African countries to UNFCCC. The Commission has also given a special focus to the agriculture component of the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) of African countries and organized two trainings in collaboration with AUDA-NEPAD to enhance its understanding and implementation.

d. **Partnership for Aflatoxin Control in Africa (PACA)**

157. The Commission continued to engage in piloting aflatoxin control in six Member States Nigeria, Malawi, Senegal, Tanzania, The Gambia and Uganda in 2019. All these countries have mainstreamed aflatoxins in their national agriculture investment plans and other national frameworks. In Tanzania, a USD 20 million grant project - the Tanzania Initiative for Prevention of Aflatoxin Control (TANIPAC) -, initiated and developed with the support of the Commission, following outbreaks of acute aflatoxin poisoning in two regions of the country, has been launched. Similarly, with the support of the Commission, the Aflatoxin Control for Improved Competitiveness of the Groundnut Value Chains of Malawi (AMIC) was launched in Malawi and is working to boost exports of groundnuts, which have hampered by aflatoxin contamination. In addition, the Commission is providing support to the ECOWAS Commission to implement the ECOWAS Aflatoxin Control Regional Action Plan (EACAP) aimed at harmonizing aflatoxin standards at the regional level.

158. The Commission co-organized the first AU/FAO/WHO International Food Safety Conference (IFSC) under the theme “*The Future of Food Safety: Transforming knowledge into action for people, economies and the environment*” from 12 to 13 February 2019. This meeting saw the participation of 600 stakeholders from over 140 countries, bringing food safety discussions in Africa and the world at the centre of policy dialogues to counter the menace of unsafe food to public health. The AU Special Event on Trade in Safe Food in Free Trade Areas organized by the Commission as part of the plenary sessions captured experiences in food safety governance in free trade areas with particular reference to the AfCFTA.

159. The Commission launched the Africa Food Safety Index (AFSI) for mainstreaming food safety tracking and capacity building in Africa through the CAADP Malabo Biennial Review mechanism. The Commission has supported Member States to assess food control systems and strengthen preparedness and functionality of food safety systems to protect consumer health and promote trade. In 2019, the Commission trained more than 300 food safety experts, CAADP focal points and CODEX focal points on food safety indicators within AFSI for data collection and reporting. With the technical support of the Commission, 49 countries reported on the Biennial Review and provided data for the AFSI in 2019.

e. **Semi-Arid Food Grains Research and Development (AU-SAFGRAD)**

160. In 2019, the AU-SAFGRAD, in collaboration with the government of Burkina Faso, organised from 25 to 27 July 2019, a High Level Policy Dialogue on the Migration, Land Degradation and Sustainable Development in the Sahel G5 Countries, aimed at enabling the Sahel G5 Member States to come up with common understanding to facilitate coherent management of migration in the region, with specific topics and their impact, such as on environment protection, sustainable livelihood production, pastoralist promotion. In partnership with the Arab League through the Arab Fund for Technical Assistance to African Countries (AFTAAC), a Capacity building training for 17 early and mid-career researchers and scientists targeting public agricultural research institutions in 16 French-Speaking Member States took place at the Regional Training Centre for Water Sector (RTCWS) in Cairo, Egypt, focusing on Climate Smart Agriculture for Drylands.

161. The Commission co-organized with UNCCD Secretariat in August 2019, in South Africa, a preparatory meeting for the UNCCD Conference of the Party COP14 to be held in India. Science and Technical Correspondents (STC) from 11 African countries participated along with the UNCCD focal points from 30 Members States. A set of recommendations was prepared, including African common position to be defended in New Delhi.

162. Further, the Africa Union Framework for Irrigation Development and Agricultural Water Management (IDAWM) has been developed, validated and endorsed by the STC in October 2019. It provides a continental blueprint to mainstream irrigation development and agricultural water management programs and activities in Member States and RECs.

The Commission has led preparation of a continental Guidelines/Instrument to strengthen and promote the development of pastoralism to prevent conflicts between farmers and pastoralists in Africa. This document was produced through collaborative efforts with RECs and was validated at a workshop hosted by COMESA in November 2019 in Lusaka, Zambia.

f. **Inter-African Phytosanitary Council (IAPSC)**

163. Due to its wide agro-ecological zones, Africa has a huge potential to produce a staggering range of agricultural commodities if pests and disease are put under control not to affect plants. Consequently, Member States need to invest significant resources to combating pests so as to maintain Africa's plant health status and maintain a biosecurity system. This is made more necessary as international trade, travel and market demands take a more stringent view of pest status. In this regard, Member States governments, farmers and agro-industries face increased competition for infrastructure and financial resources.

164. It is against this background that the IAPSC continued to reflect on the challenges that African National Plant Protection Organizations (NPPOs) will face in future, while pursuing development and coordination of Africa plant health policies. Thus, the strategic plant health issues at hand considered during 2019 include:

- i) Enhancing compliance of AU Member States with International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures (ISPMs), regulations, standards setting processes and operational procedures;

- ii) Mitigating impacts and risks of pandemic and exotic invasive plant pest species on livelihoods and biodiversity in Africa and facilitating phytosanitary response to new or changed plant health risk of Africa;
- iii) Promoting human capacity development on Integrated Pest Management (IPM), Pest Risk Analysis (PRA), plant health enforcement best practices, pesticides management and national surveillance for emergency plant pests and development of Public Private Partnerships between IAPSC and stakeholders to support continental plant health efforts;
- iv) Monitoring, analysing and reporting on the status of plant protection in Africa on regular basis, with a particular focus on pest outbreaks and pest distribution;
- v) Sensitizing policy and decision-makers on the contribution of improved and strengthened plant pest management to the economy of Africa.

165. A number of workshops and consultations on mainstreaming Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS) in country CAADP information systems were undertaken to build Member States' capacity in Integrated Pest Management strategies and implementation of IPM for sustainable agriculture; IPPC Regional workshop for Africa that reviewed the draft ISPMs. Crop protection experts and IAPSC observed that efforts to control the diseases and insect pests are still fragmented, with actions limited to some regions, allowing the epidemic to persist.

166. It is to be noted that poor adoption of control measures, limited capacity for early and accurate detection, non-effective compliance with the International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures by Member States and inadequate regulatory and phytosanitary management measures across Africa undermined efforts to deal with the problem. In order to help mitigating the risk of exotic pests being introduced into Africa, there is an urgent need to set up the continental plant health surveillance programme, with hazard site surveillance, surveillance reference group, the various national plant health surveillance strategy, agro industry-specific surveillance plan, and surveillance diagnostic and reporting tool.

III. Environmental Sustainability

a. Africa's Engagement in Global Climatic Change Negotiations

167. The Commission, in February 2019, on the margins of the AU Summit and in collaboration with the Government of Gabon, organized the CAHOSCC meeting; while on the margins of the Africa Climate Week in March 2019, the NDC Support to countries was launched. On another aspect, draft Terms of Reference for the review and validation of the Africa Climate Change Strategy were prepared. These were in addition to the support offered to some youth and women under the CAHOSCC Youth, and CAHOSCC Women and Gender Programmes on Climate Change respectively. Work programmes for youth, gender and women were updated; and support was given to youth and women to raise and defend issues relevant to them during the Climate Change negotiations.

• *Maritime Strategy (Blue Economy)*

168. In accordance with the Decision of the Assembly adopted at its 22nd Ordinary

Session, wherein it declared the 2015-2025 decade as the "*Decade of African Seas and Oceans*", and the date of 25 July as "*African Day of Seas and Oceans*", the Commission celebrated the 2019 African Day of Seas and Oceans with an event held on Thursday, 25 July 2019, at the AU Headquarters, under the theme "*Enhancing Africa's role in a Globally binding instrument on Marine biological diversity in areas beyond national jurisdictions*". The 2019 celebrations focused on bringing awareness to Member States on the ongoing negotiations of an international legally binding instrument under the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdictions (BBNJ). The event addressed the necessity of having a Common African Position in the ongoing negotiations of a BBNJ instrument, taking into consideration the objectives of adopted AU legal frameworks and strategies in force.

169. In the same vein, within its mandate to implement of the 2050 AIM Strategy, the Commission participated in the 3rd Session of the Intergovernmental Conference from 19 to 30 August 2019 in New York (USA). This Negotiation Forum constituted an excellent concrete opportunity to raise awareness on AU Policy and Legal Instruments governing the African Maritime domain.

170. In this respect, the African Group in New York expressed the wish of having a political declaration made by the AU Assembly, detailing the priorities of Africa in the ongoing negotiations for the BBNJ Legal Binding Instrument. This action was strongly recommended, to ensure that some of the red lines for the Group, including the Common Heritage of Mankind principle and the Access and Benefit Sharing Mechanism (ABSM) are strongly captured and endorsed by the highest decision-making organ of the AU.

171. During the year under review, the Commission also developed the African Union Blue Economy Strategy, which was subsequently adopted by the Third Ordinary Session of the STC on Agriculture, Rural Development, Water and Environment on 24 October 2019. It will ensure the completion of the institutionalization of the Blue Economy file in the coming months. Meanwhile, the Commission co-organised with the Government of Norway the first ever Africa-Norshipping Event on Oslo, Norway in May 2019. Meanwhile, AUDA-NEPAD also developed a continental programme on Blue Economy that was validated by various stakeholders including 8 RECs; and related continental discussion took place within the context of AfCFTA.

b. Conserving Africa's wild fauna and flora

172. The Commission organized, on the margins of the AU Wildlife Experts Group Meeting, held in Addis Ababa, from 10 to 12 April 2019, a side event on Corruption and Illegal Exploitation and Illicit Trade in wildlife related products on the margins of the February 2019 Summit, under the theme "*Corruption and the Illicit Exploitation and Trade of Africa's Natural Resources: the Case of Fisheries, Forestry and Wildlife*". This event, attended by 31 countries, adopted a Position Paper for CITES to be further discussed during CITES COP 18.

173. The Commission also held the Africa Region Consultations for the Post 2020 Global Framework for Biodiversity. This meeting, attended by 51 Member States and representatives from the Civil Society, deliberated on Africa's priorities, key positions

and messages. Further, the Commission co-organized the Wildlife Directors Forum for Southern Africa which brought together ten countries from SADC and its Secretariat, INTERPOL, TRAFFIC, Grace Farms Foundation, UNODC, and the US Mission in the SADC region. The aim was to popularize the Strategy.

- ***The Great Green Wall for the Sahara and Sahel Initiative (GGWSSI)***

174. In 2019, the GGWSSI Coordination Hub at the Commission has been involved in various activities to enhance the visibility of the initiative and garnering support for its implementation. They included participating at the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD); the 14th Conference of Parties in New Delhi, India; Steering Committees of several projects supporting Member States in implementation of the initiative; and organisation of the inter-ministerial dialogue forum in Cameroon, besides engaging international media.

175. Another major activity undertaken in 2019 is the inception phase for the extension of the initiative in the dry lands of Southern Africa following a request from SADC Environment Ministers and the STC on Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment in 2017. In that connection, and in collaboration with the SADC Secretariat and its 16 Member States of the region, the GGWSSI hub organised a write-shop for the finalisation of the Great Green Wall initiative strategy for the Southern Africa Region. It was followed by a dialogue forum with Non-States Actors in the region, to enable them make their inputs in the draft strategy that was adopted by the SADC Environment Ministers conference on 25 October 2019.

- c. **African Regional Strategy on Disaster Risk Reduction and Programme of Action for Implementation of Sendai Framework 2015-2030 in Africa**

- ***Africa Biennial Report on Disaster Risk Reduction***

176. The Report was endorsed by the 3rd Ordinary Session of the STC on Agriculture, Rural Development, Water and Environment held from 21 to 25 October 2019 in Addis Ababa. It emphasized the need to invest in risk reduction and resilience measures rather than waiting for disasters to occur; and to support Member States to build their capacities on Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR). Meanwhile, establishment of the Africa Science and Technology Advisory Group (AfSTAG) and Youth Advisory Board (AYAB) held their inaugural meetings and developed their action plans.

- ***Support to RECs and Member States in Rollout and Domestication of Africa Programme of Action for the Implementation of Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 (PoA)***

177. Under this programme, one hundred and nineteen (119) participants from forty-five (45) Member States received training and orientation on the Africa Programme of Action for the implementation of the Sendai Framework 2015-2030, organized by the Commission. Also, the African Common Position on DRR was presented to the 2019 Global Platform for DRR, held from 13 to 17 May 2019 in Geneva, Switzerland, and

attended by 3800 delegates from across the globe.

178. A number of assessments were undertaken in RECs and Member States to assess the implementation of DRR programmes in Africa and to identify best practices. At global scale, the Commission participated in the intra -Africa, Caribbean and Pacific (Intra-ACP) meetings, which facilitated the exchange on experiences and best practices among the 3 Regions.

- ***Implementation of Water and Sanitation (African Water 2025) Initiatives in line with the June 2008 Sharm El Sheikh Summit Commitment***

179. The Commission, in collaboration with the African Ministers' Council on Water (AMCOW) adopted its 2018-2030 Strategy to chart the course of implementation for the African Water Vision 2025 towards the realization of African Union Agenda 2063 and the SDGs. These were followed by the convening of the 5th Africa Sanitation (AfricaSan-5) and 5th Faecal Sludge Management (FSM-5) Conference in February 2019 in Cape Town, South Africa, that came up with several important recommendations; as well as a coordination meeting held in April 2019 that outlined the work on Water and Sanitation Programme in Africa; and Partners' Coordination Meeting on Water and Sanitation Programme in Africa of October 2019. These recommendations were subsequently endorsed by 3rd STC on Agriculture, Rural Development, Water and Agriculture (ARDWE) in October 2019 which also launched Partners' Coordination Platform.

d. **Environmental Pollution Control**

180. Concerned by high volumes of plastic bags and materials littering the cities and towns of Africa, and the aspiration to ban plastics on the continent, the Commission, in collaboration with UNEP, organized two high-level side events on plastic pollution reduction. The first one under the theme '*Banning Plastics towards a Pollution Free Africa Campaign*' took place on 10 February 2019 on the margins of the 32nd Summit in January 2019 in Addis Ababa and graced by the African First Ladies, in a bid to implement the Decision of the 2nd STC on Agriculture, Rural Development, Water and Environment. Seven First Ladies (Angola, Botswana, Congo, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana and Kenya) accepted to be Champions. The event culminated with an adoption of a Communique that, among other issues, expressed commitments to use various avenues and involvement of the public to advocate banning plastics and to create a platform for experience sharing on best practices to reduce plastic pollution. It also encouraged Member States to find innovative solutions and substitutes for plastics through research, including indigenous knowledge in order to come up with environmentally friendly and biodegradable alternatives, and to work closely with the Commission and all relevant partners in the rolling out of the assignment to address plastic pollution in Africa.

181. The second event was on '*Plastic Pollution Solutions for Development in Africa*' and was organized on 28 August 2019 in Japan on the margins of the 7th Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD-7). It was in implementation of the Communique of the African First Ladies of February 2019 some of whom attended in person. The event created the platform to share best practices and experiences on reduction of plastic pollution and waste management. It came out with

a Joint Statement reinforcing the resolutions incorporated in the February 2019 communique of the First Ladies.

- ***Sustainable Forest and Land Management***

182. Significant milestones have been achieved in 2019 in the areas of forestry and land management. The finalisation of the African Union Sustainable Forest Management Framework was the key achievement in this sector. The draft Framework has been endorsed by the 3rd Session of the STC on Agriculture, Rural Development, Water and Environment in October 2019.

183. In the general area of forestry resource conservation, the Commission, in collaboration with Member States, RECs and partners, has conducted high level and regional policy dialogues on the problem of illegal exploitation and trade in the forestry, wildlife and fisheries sectors. On land management, efforts continue in addressing the challenges of desertification and drought. The STC on Agriculture, Rural Development, Water and Environment has adopted the Windhoek Declaration for Enhancing Resilience to Drought in Africa and the Strategic Framework for Drought Risk Management and Enhancing Resilience in Africa as tools to holistically address the continuing threats of land degradation and droughts on the continent.

G. INVESTING IN THE AFRICAN PEOPLE, ESPECIALLY THE YOUTH, WOMEN AND CHILDREN

I. Science, Technology and Innovation Driven Education

a. Implementation of STISA-2024

184. The Commission implemented a number of programmes under Science, Technology and Innovation strategy for Africa (STISA 2024) during the 2019 period. The following are the key activities and achievements. For instance, AUDA-NEPAD in collaboration with the Ministry of ICT of Eswatini embarked on the first phase of assessing the effects of innovation on economic performance of sub-sectors in the Kingdom of Eswatini. The data collected will be used to design data collection instruments for the second part of the mapping exercise for measuring sub-sector innovation performance and its impact in Eswatini. Similar activities are currently underway in Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Senegal and Egypt. Other activities were:

- ***African Union Kwame Nkrumah Scientific Excellence Awards (AUKNASE)***

185. During the January 2019 Summit and as per the established annual practice to raise the profile of science, technology and innovation in the continent, the Commission recognized two distinguished African scientists through Kwame Nkrumah Scientific Excellence Awards, at the continental level, namely: Prof. Richardson David Mark - a native of South Africa winner in the category of Earth and Life Science and Prof. Abdel-Shafy Fahmy Obada - a native of Egypt winner in the category of Basic Science, Technology and Innovation. Two awardees were identified

at regional level namely: Prof. Atti Naziha from Northern Africa and Prof. Alletta Elisabeth Schutte from Southern Africa.

- ***African Union Research Grant programme Open call for proposal***

186. The African Union Research Grant (AURG) programme was introduced within the Commission in 2011 to support Research and Development through grants and direct funding. The programme promotes research collaboration between African regions and to build African Research capacity. Since 2010, the Commission has received about 35 Million US dollars from the 10th EDF Intra-ACP Envelop and the EU Pan-African Programme (PanAf) to launch calls for proposals in two phases respectively. In 2019, the Commission finalized the first instalment of payments to the ten (10) lead institutions and monitored the nine (9) sites under the 2016 awarded projects, through two auditing processes under the pillar assessment and the EU assigned auditing.

- b. **Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) Measurements and Policy Analysis undertaken by the African Observatory on Science technology and Innovation (AOSTI)**

187. AOSTI has implemented its programme on Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) measurements and policy analysis in the RECs and in Member States. A review of the status of implementation of the Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa, 2014-2024 (STISA-2024) was carried out as part of the AOSTI process in developing a robust monitoring and evaluation framework for STISA implementation across Member States. The review highlighted the relevance of STISA 2024, as well as the need to develop support mechanisms for resource mobilization and programme implementation. AOSTI continued to strengthen the capacity of relevant actors to assess and review their National Innovation Systems. About 65 officials (Gambia (35), Seychelles (30)) experts are trained on R&D and Innovation data collection on NIS concepts and methodology. Furthermore, AOSTI was commissioned by ECOWAS to assess aspects of innovation and intellectual property in their fifteen (15) Member States. A report and a compilation of innovation and intellectual property (IP) Indicators are made for twenty (20) Member States, including the 15 ECOWAS MS and five (5) of the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU), for the 14 years-period running from 2005 to 2018.

- ***Science and Technology activities undertaken by the African Union Scientific, Technical and Research Commission (AU-STRC)***

188. The AU-STRC is mandated to implement programmes and projects that are guided by the Science Technology Innovation Strategy for Africa 2014-2024 (STISA-2024). Over the reporting period, considerable progress has been made in the implementation of projects and programmes: African Scientific Research and Innovation Council; African Union Network of Sciences; African Union Green Innovation Framework; India Africa Health Research Collaboration; AU-STRC, UNESCO, MERCK MARS Summit 2019; Research Translation from Bench to Bedside in Africa; and the Capacity Building Initiative on Inclusive /Community-based Innovation for AU Member States.

- ***African Scientific Research and Innovation Council (ASRIC)***

189. The ASRIC is a continental platform to mobilize African research excellence, innovation and provide a platform for dialogue and voice of the scientific community in building and sustaining continental research-policy nexus with the aim of addressing Africa's socio-economic development challenges. Since its launch last year in Abuja, Nigeria, ASRIC held the election of its 1st Bureau which conducted two meetings in March and September 2019 respectively. It is in the process of launching the ASRIC scientific Journals with the following Scientific/thematic areas: ASRIC Journal of Health Sciences; ASRIC Journal of Agricultural Sciences; ASRIC Journal of Water, Energy and Environmental Sciences; and ASRIC Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities during the 2nd ASRIC Congress. Each of these Journals is designed to be published biannually.

190. The ASRIC has the vision for these Journals to be Africa's highest quality journals, attracting African scientific excellence within the continent and the Diaspora. The 2nd Congress of ASRIC took place from 20 to 23 November 2019 in Abuja, Nigeria, attracting more than 100 scientists from across the continent to present their scientific findings (papers) on the congress's theme which is "*Freeing Africa from poverty, Hunger and Disease*".

- ***African Union Network of Sciences (AUNS)***

191. The African Union Network of Sciences (AUNS) is a virtual platform that gives comprehensive interaction within the knowledge society and posts the African Research and Innovation output/library. AUNS is an innovative way to enhance brain circulation and bridge the African based Scientists and those in the Diaspora to address Africa's challenges. The Chairperson of the Commission, Moussa Faki Mahamat, serves as one of the high-level champions of AUNS. AUNS is currently conducting the second phase of the project, which entails the development of the Network portal, modules, data base and digital library. The preliminary modules of the AUNS (prototype) have been developed and the development of the data base of scientists is a continuing process which has grown to over 8000 scientists, from across the five regions of the African Union. Despite the challenges that resulted in delays, the service provider has been identified and the AUNS portal will be fully function before the end of 2019.

- ***AU Green Innovation Framework***

192. The AU Green Innovation Framework is intended to guide Member States towards a path of economic prosperity through sustainable technological, industrial and system innovations. The Framework aims to galvanize the efforts of and between African countries to enhance societal and economic resilience to environmental pressures, promote a greater efficient use of natural resources and to achieve ultimately the aspirations of Agenda 2063. A high Level Panel was set up by the AU-STRC to produce the framework which is now collecting inputs from external reviewers.

- ***India-Africa Health Research Collaboration***

193. Guided by the Assembly Decisions on strengthening the South-South cooperation and the India-AU Partnership in particular, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the AU-STRC and the Indian Council of Medical Research ICMR on 27 March 2019 in India. The MoU is designed to focus on the mutual benefit of Africa and India and has the following priority areas: Training and Capacity Building of Health and Medical practitioners; Health Sciences Research; and Pharmaceutical Trade and Manufacturing. Under priority area “Training and Capacity Building of Health and Medical practitioners”, a Call for application was sent out in June 2019 and a total of 428 applications were received, of which 121 scientists have been trained while the second batch of the Call for the capacity building training was expected for December 2019. Under priority area “Pharmaceutical Trade and Manufacturing”, this is under development and will focus on training of African drug regulators on regulatory standards, procedures; control; testing; documentary needs; management; licensing of drugs; biologicals and manufacturing; Intellectual Property Rights concepts, rules and procedures; training on best practices in clinical trial approvals and conduct to help harmonization in clinical trials between India and Africa; and Joint Exhibition (SOUK) and pharma-week.

194. Meanwhile and on another plain, the Pharmaceutical Manufacturing Plan for Africa (PMPA) Partnership platform was strengthened through training 30 participants from AU continental bodies, RECs and Member States on the strategic use of innovation and intellectual property in the pharmaceutical sector to move Africa towards a knowledge-based economy. In addition, the Africa Pharma Conference (APC) 2019, which defined the roadmap for strengthening implementation of PMPA, was organized in June 2019 in South Africa by AUDA-NEPAD in collaboration with AU Commission and other partners supporting the PMPA. It was under the theme “*Catalyzing Local Production for Improved Access to Pharmaceuticals and Health Commodities.*” The conference came out with ten recommendations covering, among others, the need to support countries to develop relevant strategies, review the progress of PMPA, and to accelerate the implementation of the STC on Health, Population and Drug Control recommendation to establish the Fund for African Pharmaceutical sector.

- **AU-STRC, UNESCO, MERCK MARS Summit 2019**

195. The AU-STRC co-organized with UNESCO and Merck international, the UNESCO-Merck Africa research Summit 2019, under the theme “*Empowering Women and Youth in Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM)*,” on 30 October 2019 in Accra, Ghana. It was attended by over 20 Ministers from Member States. The Summit was designed for the development of female STEM capacity in Africa, as well as an opportunity for disbursement of awards and scholarship to build Africa’s women scientists in health sciences.

- c. **Implementation of the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA)**

196. The most strategic activity has been ensuring that the CESA is owned by stakeholders including Member States; and national, regional continental and global

institutions and agencies working in education in Africa. The Commission has collaborated with UNESCO to help ease the reporting burden of Member States, as they subscribe to both continental and global (UN) development frameworks, in this case, CESA and SDG4. Further engagement with the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) was planned and executed in March 2019, under which ways of streamlining monitoring and evaluation instruments were proposed and discussed. The division of responsibilities for the benefit of Member States were also agreed upon.

197. The Commission also organized the second exhibition of innovations in education in Gaborone, Botswana in August 2019, which was aimed to enhance access, quality, impact and employability, and also making STEM more accessible, especially for girls. Out of 455 submissions mostly from African Youth, 11 top innovations were selected and the innovators won cash prizes, with the 1st prize being 50,000 USD; next 20,000 USD; 10,000 USD; and eight prizes of 5,000 USD each. As an established practice, the winning innovators will be assisted to access potential financiers to help grow their enterprises in education innovation. As further deliverables from the Expo, the Commission has developed an African Education Innovators Platform online. The Education Innovations Handbook for the 2018 was published, which has been subsequently updated to include the 2019 activities. Rwanda has offered to host the 2020 Innovating Education Expo.

d. Girls and Women's Education

198. The African Union International Center for Girls' and Women's Education in Africa (AU/CIEFFA) has adopted an inclusive approach towards the implementation of numerous legal instruments, policies and frameworks pertaining to girls and women's education. Despite the numerous existing normative frameworks and efforts made by Member States to implement them, girls and women still lack access and retention to educational systems due to persisting social norms, harmful and traditional practices, ineffective policies, poor infrastructure, especially during conflicts and humanitarian situations.

199. During 2019, the AU/CIEFFA has reflected on the AU Theme of the year through several meetings, actions and collaboration. The Center held its 3rd High level Dialogue on "Gender, Education and Protection of schools in Humanitarian settings" during the February 2019 Summit, in collaboration with the Department of Political Affairs and Save the Children. On the advocacy level, AU/CIEFFA held its 2nd Dialogue with African traditional and religious Leaders in Uganda in June 2019 to re-define roles and responsibilities of Faith-Based Organizations at community level and to advocate for the acceleration of girls' access and retention in educational systems. Various members of the Council of Traditional Leaders (COTLA) attended this Dialogue.

e. Higher Education Scholarship, Harmonization and Quality Assurance

200. In 2019, the Mwalimu Nyerere AU Scholarship Call was focused on Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons pursuing studies at Masters and PhD levels, in

support of the AU Theme for 2019. 25 new students have been selected competitively for the scholarship award. The Intra-Africa Academic mobility programme sponsored by the EU with representatives from the Departments of Social and Political Affairs completed the selection process for the 5th Call. So far, 97 Universities from 38 Member States have benefitted, with 1280 Africans having received full scholarships for masters, PhD and Staff mobility programmes.

201. Efforts have been made in 2019 to publish the research outputs sponsored through the Nyerere and Intra-Africa mobility schemes, to be disseminated for greater impact. In implementation of the AU Strategy for Harmonisation of Higher Education, the Commission has continued to publicise the Addis Convention on mutual recognition of qualifications. It is worthy to note that 17 Member States have now signed and 6 ratified the Convention. The Continental African Standard and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in higher education was completed and is in the process of publication. Furthermore, a consolidated report on the third institutional evaluations using the African Quality Rating Mechanism (AQRM) for 15 higher education institutions has been finalized and published.

f. Teacher Development

202. Looking at the need to strengthen Teacher Regulatory agencies, the Commission initiated in 2019 a study to develop a Continental Teacher Qualification Framework in partnership with the African Federation of Teacher Regulatory Agencies (AFTRA). The work includes development of Teacher Professional Standards and Guidelines, which is necessary for establishing teaching as a distinguished profession and preferred career. The work was validated in October 2019 with the Inauguration of the First AU Continental Teacher Prize in which three outstanding Teachers from Kenya, Uganda and Ghana were awarded, each with 10,000 USD.

203. The AU Continental Teacher Prize processes are designed to identify and highlight outstanding teachers across the African educational system, and contribute to development of a compendium of success factors in teaching and learning. It is aimed to raise the status of the teaching profession and the teacher, and inspire the best possible candidates to join the teaching profession. It is also aimed to serve as a catalyst for similar programmes at regional and national levels. The Teacher Prize is an important and valuable instrument that contributes to the success of Agenda 2063 and the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA).

204. Moreover, Science Technology Engineering and Math (STEM) education and needs assessments were conducted in Ethiopia, Ghana, Nigeria, Malawi and Gabon for building capacities of teachers to deploy quality education.

g. Pan-African Institute of Education for Development (IPED)

205. The Pan-African Institute of Education for Development (IPED), which is based in Kinshasa, serves as the Continental Education Observatory, responsible for ensuring knowledge based education planning. IPED managed the completion of the CESA Indicators' Manual, along with a Monitoring and Reporting Framework, which was published in September 2019, based on the contributions it received from Member States and other partners. Data capture instruments have been developed and piloted

in 6 Member States, and the final outcome was released after validation in August 2019.

206. IPED started collaboration with the RECs in March 2019, in order to implement the platform on Education, Science and Technology and Innovation in Member States that have weak or non-functional National Education Management Information system (NEMIS) system. A draft monitoring and evaluation instrument has been developed for use by CESA Thematic Clusters, for ensuring coordinated implementation and reporting of partners and key stakeholders, towards a common vision. In May 2019, IPED, in partnership with UNHCR, Save the Children and UNICEF, held a consultation on mainstreaming refugees into NEMIS system in Kampala, Uganda, as part of the implementation of the AU theme for 2019.

I. Social Development – Social Welfare, Vulnerable Groups and Drug Control

a. DISABILITY

- ***Continental Plan of Action on the African Decade of Persons with Disabilities (2010 – 2019)***

207. The Commission completed an evaluation of the implementation of the AU Plan of Action on the African Decade of Persons with Disabilities (2010 – 2019) and developed a report which was submitted to the 3rd STC on Social Development, Labour and Employment in April 2019. The Report contains advancement in the filed disability rights in Africa as well as the commitment of Member States in ensuring that persons with disabilities are included in development as well as the mainstreaming of disability in development.

- ***Africa Union Disability Strategic Framework***

208. In line with the mandate for the Commission to develop the successor policy document to the Continental Plan of Action (2010-2019) on the African Decade of Persons with Disabilities (2010-2019), for consideration by the STC-SDLE-3 in 2019, the AU Strategic Disability Framework was endorsed by the Ministers in April 2019 and was adopted by the Executive Council in Niamey in July 2019. The Strategy has been sent to Member States for domestication and implementation in 2020. Through this action plan, the Commission will continue to promote a multi-sectorial, balanced and integrated approach to disability rights and development.

- ***Appointment of a Special Envoy on Albinism***

209. The Executive Council session held in Niamey, Niger from 4 to 5 July 2019, requested the Commission to appoint a Special Envoy for Persons with Albinism without additional financial implications. TORs for the appointment of a Special Envoy have been drafted and submitted to the office of the Commissioner for onward transmission to the office of the Chairperson. The Government of the Republic of Kenya has submitted a communication on intention to nominate a Special Envoy for Persons with Albinism which will be presented to the February 2020 Summit.

b. **AGEING**

• ***Policy Framework and Plan of Action on Ageing (2002)***

210. In recognition of the limitations of the AU Plan, Member States, in the First STC on Social Development, Labour and Employment (STC-SDLE-1) in April 2015, formally recommended a review and revision of the Policy Framework and Plan of Action on Ageing (2002). This was adopted by the Executive Council in June 2015, while requesting the Commission to align the Plan of Action to the Protocol. The Review and update of the Policy Framework and Plan of Action on Ageing (2002) has commenced with the convening of the 1st Drafting Experts Group on ageing which met in Nairobi to set the assignment and come up with milestones to realize the implementation of the decision.

• ***Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Older Persons in Africa***

211. Various missions and activities were undertaken to lobby and advocate for the signing and ratification of the AU Protocol on Older Persons. Missions were dispatched to Gaborone, Botswana in February, Dakar, Senegal in May, Harare in September, and the PAP in May. Collaboration with the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights in Kigali, Rwanda reached out to around 45 Member States. In October, an Advocacy Workshop was held where 30 Member States participated. The Workshop resolved that each Member State should work towards ratifying the Protocol by December 2020 for it to come into force after the minimum 15 ratifications would have been deposited.

c. **The African Union Campaign to End Child Marriage**

212. The AU Campaign to End Child Marriage, which was launched in May 2014, has been instrumental in accelerating an end to child marriage. In addition to key events and activities undertaken since its launch, the AU Campaign to End Child Marriage carried out in 2019 several activities, including monitoring and evaluation visits to two Member States, namely: Mauritius and Namibia.

213. Two major events were organized by the Campaign in 2019, namely: the Conference on Eliminating Child Marriage and Female Genital Mutilation and the Summit Side Event on Social Protection for Women and girls which took place in June in Cairo, Egypt; and July 2019, in Niamey Niger respectively. The events created platforms for Member States, Religious and Traditional Leaders, Development Partners, Civil Society and Youth participants to engage and discuss on ways to ensure an end to child marriage and other children's rights violations.

d. **Africa Centres for Disease Control (Africa CDC)**

214. Since its official launching in January 2017, Africa Centres for Disease Prevention and Control (Africa CDC) has made remarkable progress both in consolidating its organizational establishment as well as executing its mandate of supporting and strengthening Member States capabilities to prevent and control

diseases. Looking back on 2019, Africa CDC focused on enhancing its reach to Member States by facilitating the signing of agreements by Gabon and Zambia to host the African CDC Regional Collaborating Centres in Central and Southern regions respectively. Guidance and support were also provided to Member States in the establishment and strengthening of their National Public Health Institutes. Further, through the Africa CDC RISLNET initiative, 10 laboratories from Member States in Central Africa Region were networked to facilitate sharing of their public health assets for training and data sharing.

215. As one of its core mandates, Africa CDC has financially and technically supported Member States in multiple disease outbreak responses. In 2019, Africa CDC supported five outbreaks. A major effort has been Africa CDC's support to D.R. Congo to control the Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) Outbreak in the country. As such, Africa CDC has deployed more than 65 experts since the beginning of the outbreak in August 2019 as well as procured and deployed laboratory equipment and supplies. In addition to the direct support for outbreak response, Africa CDC also reinforced pandemic preparedness in Eastern and Central Africa regions and the establishment of Emergency Operation Centres in Uganda and South Sudan. Furthermore, jointly with WHO/AFR, and in partnership with the DRC, Africa CDC convened a high-level Ministerial meeting for Ministers of Health of DRC and neighbouring at-risk Member States in Goma, DRC, on 21 October 2019, to review and agree on mechanisms for cross-border collaboration to optimize preparedness and joint response in the advent of transmission of Ebola and other dangerous pathogens of public health significance to neighbouring states. A framework of collaboration to coordinate this response has now been developed and the operationalization of the action plan will be through the establishment of the Africa Ebola Coordination task force (AfECT) made up of the 10 concerned Member States from the PRC and WHO/AFR.

216. Africa CDC has also facilitated the adoption of the African Common Position on Antimicrobial Resistance during the STCs for Health and Agriculture. In this regard, a Ministerial resolution requesting Africa CDC to provide guidance and support Member States to mobilize resources for strengthening mortality surveillance systems and CRVS in Africa at the COM5 Ministerial meeting was passed.

217. As one of its priority strategic pillars, Africa CDC has taken major steps in short- and long-term workforce development for health in the continent. It has launched the Africa CDC Institute for Workforce Development in 2019 that has provided training on different public health core functions to candidates selected from Member States. Further, in collaboration with higher level institutes within the continent, it has built the capacity of Member States by providing Master Level Epidemiology training.

218. In the past year, Africa CDC has instituted partnerships and collaboration with multiple regional and national entities that include the World Bank, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, European CDC, China CDC and USCDC. It also led and facilitated multiple regional and international dialogues with Member States and Partners in the areas of risk assessment and risk profiling in infectious disease outbreak, quality of care, data management, human resources, emergency preparedness and management, antimicrobial resistance, innovations in diagnostics, one health, laboratory systems optimization and networks, and biosecurity and biosafety. Moreover, Africa CDC has launched the Africa Collaborative Initiative to Advance

Diagnostics, the Pathogen Genomic Intelligence Institute, the Public Private and Philanthropic Initiative, as well as the Public Health Grand Rounds this year.

e. **The Africa Health Strategy (AHS) 2016-2030**

219. Following the establishment of the Africa Medicine Agency (AMA) by the Assembly in January 2019, seven Member States have signed the Treaty. The Commission continues to urge all Member States to sign and ratify the AMA Treaty which will come into force upon the receipt by the Commission of the 15th instrument of ratification. Towards that goal, guidance documents and manuals were developed in addition to workshop training on the AU Model Law on Medical Products Regulation to assist countries to fast track the domestication process. The Commission wishes to acknowledge and appreciate the ongoing support of the Government of Mali, through the Honourable Minister of Health and Social Affairs, Michel Sidibe, in the form of advocacy, geared at encouraging Member States to sign and ratify the Treaty.

220. The Commission fully participated in the United Nations General Assembly special session on Universal Health Coverage that was held under the theme “*Universal Health Coverage: moving together to build a healthier world*”. The Commission fully aligns itself with the outcome of the General Assembly Resolution A/RES/74/2. The Commission looks forward to supporting Member States in meeting commitments that have been made particularly through encouraging them to increase financial commitment for health and scaled up primary health care interventions.

f. **Catalytic Framework to end AIDS, TB and Eliminate Malaria by 2030**

• ***Stronger Leadership and Governance:***

221. The STC Meeting on Health, Population and Drug Control endorsed the Political Declaration on Prevention Care and Treatment of Viral Hepatitis for the African region, during its 3rd Ordinary Session held in Cairo, Egypt from 29 July to 2 August 2019. Furthermore, the Assembly endorsed the Africa Leadership Meeting Investing in Health (ALM) Declaration to support an increase of the share of Member State domestic health financing and reorientation of Africa’s health systems for accelerating the continent aspiration to achieve health target, including the Universal Health Coverage. Likewise, the STC adopted the Africa Leadership Meeting (ALM)-Investing in Health next steps implementation mechanisms and tools during its third ordinary session.

222. AIDS Watch Africa Experts met from 13 to 14 November, to review AWA Progress Report on the implementation of the 2018 and AWA Heads of State and Government Decision. The experts further discussed the AU plan to review the implementation of the Catalytic Framework 2016-2020 and were provided an update on Post-Africa Leadership Meeting Investing in Health (ALM) road map, implementation plan and tools, including the TB status as per the 2018 Scorecard, Common African Position on TB and accountability framework and outcome of the United Nations High Level Meeting on Tuberculosis (UNHLM). A report on AWA 2019 be submitted to the Assembly for consideration in February 2020.

223. Further, the Commission developed and disseminated Information for Action: HIV prevention in Africa policy brief highlights the new HIV infection trends. As well, commitments for actions are developed and shared with Member States. In the Southern Region, SADC Ministers of Health and HIV/AIDs approved a regional TB Strategy in November 2019.

- ***Accountability: Established Accountability and Oversight for Results***

224. Forty (40) countries in Africa have developed national malaria control and elimination scorecards and action trackers based on African Leaders Malaria Alliance (ALMA) and AU scorecards. Scorecards including TB and Domestic Health Financing version 2019 have been produced, discussed and reviewed in November 2019 during AWA-Experts meeting. Health financing mechanisms, strategies and tools aimed at increased domestic resources have been developed and endorsed by the African Ministers within the framework of the ALM- Investing in Health Declaration, including the ALM- Countries' Implementation roadmap, establishment of the Regional Health Financing Hubs within RECs, development of the ALM - Domestic Health Financing Tracker, as well as the establishment of the Stakeholders Accountability Framework for the smooth implementation of the above Declaration.

225. Twenty-Four (24) Member States participated in the Sixth Replenishment Conference for the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, with the support of the African Union, and pledged a cumulative of US\$75.20 million. Various stakeholders pledged a total of US\$14.20 billion in this cycle. In the SADC region, the oversight committee for TB in mines was reconstituted and dashboard has been approved by the Regional Advisory committee. The committee has been trained and are now supporting oversight activities at the regional and national level.

- ***African Regional Nutrition Strategy (2016-2025)***

226. H.M. King of Lesotho, King Letsie III and AU Nutrition Champion, held a successful consultation with private sector and a cross sectional representation of parliamentarians from African parliaments, including the Pan African Parliament. The consultation advanced recommendations to strengthen private sector and parliamentary support for food security and nutrition. The Commission shall work with the private sector, parliamentarians and stakeholders such as the African Development Bank (AfDB) to follow up on the outcome recommendations.

- ***Addis Ababa Declaration on Population and Development (AADPD)***

227. The continent's five-year review report of the Addis Ababa Declaration on Population and Development was successfully submitted to the 52nd Session of the Commission on Population and Development from 1 to 5 April 2019. This report was also submitted as Africa's input into the 25-year review of the International Conference on Population and Development. The Commission has begun the process of preparing a Common African Position on Population and Development. Consultations have been completed with the African Civil Society and Island States. Consultations with all Member States are expected to be concluded in 2020.

- ***Plan of Action on Drug Control and Prevention***

228. The Commission completed an evaluation of the implementation of the AU Plan of Action on Drug Control and Crime Prevention (2013-2018) and drafted the revised AU Plan of Action on Drug Control and Crime Prevention for the period 2019-2023. Through this action plan, the Commission continues to promote a multi-sectorial, balanced and integrated approach to drug control cognisant of global challenges relating to drugs including health, socio-economic wellbeing, crime, terrorism and security in Member States. Drug use surveillance networks were established in nine additional countries during the reporting period, bringing the total to 29 out of the 55 African Union Member States.

229. The first report of the Pan African Epidemiology Network on “*Drug Use (PAENDU)*” was produced and launched during the 3rd STC on Health, Population and Drug Control held in Cairo, Egypt from 29 July to 2 August 2019. The Commission organised the International Consortium of Universities in Drug Demand Reduction (ICUDDR) Africa Region Catalytic meeting on 3-4 September 2019 in Addis Ababa, to put in place a leadership, communication and decision-making structures for the African Chapter of ICUDDR, as well as to select priority activities for each country, region and the continent. This is part of the Commission’s efforts to support the development of a network of universities in Africa engaged in the design and implementation of academic curricula and programs in addiction studies.

230. The African Union participated at the UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) in Vienna, Austria from 14 to 22 March 2019 and contributed to the debate on current drug policy development. The Commission also participated in inter-agency technical experts working group meetings led by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime as well as the World Health Organization from 28 to 30 August 2019 at the United Nations Office in Vienna to discuss strengthening of international drug statistics as well as priorities for capacity-building activities to improve drug information systems at the national level.

231. The Commission convened a Continental Meeting from 15 to 17 October 2019 in Port Louis, Mauritius to build the capacity of technical experts from Member States in drug demand reduction and epidemiology. The meeting reviewed progress by Member States in implementing evidence-based services to address drug use, document good practices and emerging challenges with a view to improving policy formulation and service delivery. It also discussed operationalization of recommendations from the third STC on Health, Population and Drug Control held in Cairo, Egypt (29 July – 2 August 2019), including the alignment of national drug control frameworks to the revised African Union Plan of Action on Drug Control and Crime Prevention (2019-2023).

232. On crime prevention, the Commission sensitized Member States on the emerging crime of Online Child Sexual Exploitation (OCSE) with a view to developing their capacity and mobilizing political and national level commitment to implement related programmes. To this end, the first continental Consultation on combatting Online Child Sexual exploitation was convened in March followed by a Roundtable Training Session for Member States on 9 June 2019. Further, OCSE issues were

integrated and mainstreamed into the work of the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child.

233. Commemorations for the International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, also known as the World Drug Day, and the launch of the Annual World Drug Report were held on 26 June 2019 for the first time at the Commission, as one of the four hubs worldwide where the official launch took place concurrently. This was significant as the drug problem transcends all of the African Union's five regions some of whom are experiencing a meltdown. Over the past few years, Africa has not only become a major transit route in the global trade in narcotics, but also a major producer and consumer. The sharp rise in drug trafficking and use on the continent comes with unwanted challenges to Member States' already burdened health care systems and overall social, economic and security concerns.

II. Sport

a. Coordinate a Peer Review of the Policy Framework for Sustainable Development of Sport in Africa (2008-2018)

234. The Commission held the 1st workshop to revise the Policy in Yaoundé, Cameroun in July, following which the basic parameters for the new Policy for next decade were established. The process is still ongoing to advocate on the reviewed Policy and collect feedback with a view to finalizing this document for the consideration and decision by the STC on YSC in September/October 2020.

b. Anti-Doping in Sports in Africa

235. The Commission held the Annual Africa Anti-Doping forum in Cape Town, South Africa in July. A series of recommendations emanated from that forum, of which among others:

- i) Reiterate the need for compliance to the Anti-Doping Code by all Member States;
- ii) Reaffirm the need for values-based education programs to be implemented in all countries and Member States to consider curriculum revisions and teacher training with anti-doping issues in mind.

236. Member States were urged to provide more support for local National Anti-Doping Organisations NADOs and Regional Anti-Doping Organisations and regional RADOs. The Commission also participated in World Anti-Doping Executive Committee and Foundation Board meeting Canada, and Poland, on 15 May, and 5 to 7 November 2019 respectively as well as in the UNESCO Conference of Parties Meeting in Paris, France (from 29 September to 1 October 2019).

c. African Games 2019

237. The 2019 Games took place in the Kingdom of Morocco in August. The Kingdom of Morocco deserves high appreciation for having put up a commendable organization of this major continental event, within a short period of 11 months. However, though the Games were held in a spirit of understanding and collaboration,

some shortcomings have been registered as a number of rules and regulations put in place were not in conformity with the established instruments.

d. **Quality Physical Education (QPE) in Africa**

238. It is to be recalled that the Sixth International Conference of Ministers and Senior Officials Responsible for Physical Education and Sport held in Kazan, Russia, on 15 July 2017, adopted the Kazan Action Plan (KAP) on policies on physical education, physical activity and sport. The KAP marked the commitment to link sport policy development to the 2030 UN-SDGs as well as support to the overarching sports policy follow up frameworks for priority areas for international and national multi-stakeholder cooperation. In order to implement the action plan, the Ministry of Youth and Sport of the Republic of Madagascar and the National Academy of Sport of Madagascar organised, from 10 to 13 September 2019, the first Ministerial Conference on the implementation of the KAP in Africa, taking into account to the African regional context. The meeting developed some recommendations, including:

- i) Recognizing the opportunity to foster policy coherence in the context of Agenda 2063, the Sustainable Development Goals, the Sport Policy Framework for Sustainable Development of Sport in Africa, and the KAP;
- ii) Acknowledging this Conference as an important step towards the development of a comprehensive policy that encompasses the contribution of physical education, physical activity and sport to human, social and economic development;
- iii) Recognizing the critical role of Quality Physical Education for crosscutting development priorities and the need to enhance cooperation between African ministers in charge of sport and education.

239. The meeting also recommends that the African Union recognizes H.E Mr. Andry Rajoelina, President of the Republic of Madagascar, as a Champion of Quality Physical Education and the implementation of the Kazan Action Plan in Africa.

III. **Youth Empowerment**

a. **AU Roadmap on Harnessing the Demographic Dividend**

240. Pursuant to the outcomes and roadmap of the 2017 Theme on “Harnessing the Demographic Dividend through Investments in Youth,” aimed at empowering young people, the Commission engaged in the collection of data and the finalization of indicators across the four pillars of the demographic dividend: Employment and Entrepreneurship, Education and Skills Development, Health and Wellbeing, and Rights, Governance and Youth Empowerment. The Status of African Youth Report was completed in the first quarter of 2019. This Report will help broaden the knowledge and facilitate information sharing about youth development in Africa.

b. **Pan African Youth Forum and 1 Million by 2021 Initiative**

241. The Commission hosted the Pan African Youth Forum from 24 to 27 April 2019 in Addis Ababa, with a view to maintaining the momentum in the implementation of the AU roadmap on Harnessing the Demographic Dividend and catalyse action for

youth development in Africa. The Forum brought together about 400 young people from across the continent and the diaspora to deliberate on key topics, challenges, opportunities and solutions for issues affecting young people of Africa. During the forum, the Chairperson of the Commission launched the “*one million by 2021 initiative*”.

242. The initiative aimed at reaching one million young Africans with a view to providing them with opportunities in the areas of Education, Employment, Entrepreneurship and Engagement (4E's) by the year 2021. The initiative has 12 game-changing pathways that aims at promoting solutions and innovative models on youth development interventions. During the launch of this initiative in April, a total of 17 private sector actors and development partners pledged to support the initiative through various concrete interventions across the 4E's.

c. The AU Five Year Plan on Youth Empowerment in Africa

243. The Commission has finalized the development of the African Plan of Action for Youth Empowerment (APAYE) to guide and influence the efforts and contributions of key partners and stakeholders engaged in youth empowerment on the continent. It is a successor to the DPoA (2008 - 2018) as a roadmap for the implementation of the African Youth Charter. APAYE seeks to reinforce the foundations of youth development, catalyse action at Member States level and accelerate implementation of flagship programmes linked to the “*igno*”. The youth mainstreaming framework was one of the strategic approaches through which the Commission has enhanced engagement of young people. Through this approach, a multi-sectoral and interdisciplinary working group on Youth Development has been institutionalized to leverage on the limited resources available in the promotion of youth development outcomes. The Commission has strived to build capacities of the Pan African Parliament last year and the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) this year. The Commission intends to continue reaching out and empowering other AU Organs, RECs as well as individual Member states on Youth Mainstreaming.

244. Equally, as part of the implementation of the Decent Rural Jobs project, National Action Plans for rural youth employment and entrepreneurship were developed and validated in Benin, Cameroon, Malawi and Niger. The project also equipped 647 youths (males and females) in those countries with skills to engage in agriculture value chain enterprises.

- ***Plan of Action for the TVET Decade***

245. The Commission finalized the development of the Plan of Action for the African Decade for Technical, Professional, Entrepreneurial Training and Youth Employment (2019 – 2028). The Plan of Action articulates strategic actions that will guide and influence reforms and development of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in Africa.

- ***African Youth Fund***

246. Pursuant to the Assembly's Decision of July 2017 on the establishment of the AU Youth Fund and the agreement on an allocation at least equal to 1% of the

Programme Budget of the Commission, the latter conducted a study of related funds and engaged private sector actors and development stakeholders to define the specificities of the Youth Fund and identify challenges with similar funds. In this regard, it engaged a consultancy firm to support the work on defining the architecture and instrument for the fund. Together, with the AUDA-NEPAD as implementing partner, the Commission intends to present the draft architecture, institutional arrangement and instruments for the management of the fund to the Assembly in February 2020. For coordination purposes, the draft arrangement will ensure that all youth funding vehicles within the AU, including with the Skills Initiative for Africa (SIFA), are structured within the fund governance. It is expected that the fund will become operational in 2020.

- ***African Union Youth Volunteer Corps (AU-YVC)***

247. The AU-YVC is a flagship program of the African Union which recruits, trains and deploys young African professionals to serve as volunteers for a period of 12 months. The AU-YVC promotes volunteerism as a tool for Youth Empowerment, Mainstreaming and Participation contributing towards Africa's Development and Agenda 2063. Since launch of the program in December 2010, over 800 youth have been recruited/trained and over 400 deployed across the continent. Furthermore, the African Union has established a Continental Volunteer Linkage Platform which brings actors in Member States, civil society and partners engaged in volunteer action to promote common standards in volunteerism in Africa. The platform also seeks to foster collaboration towards accelerating the contribution of Volunteerism to Youth Empowerment through civic engagement and contribution to Agenda 2063.

- d. **African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACERWC)**

248. It should be noted that currently, 49 Member States out of 55 have ratified the 1990 African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child. In this respect, the Committee considers Reports submitted and issues Concluding Observations and Recommendations intended to advise concerned State Parties on measures to be taken by them in furtherance of the provisions of the Charter. Pursuant to its mandate, ACERWC carried out the following activities:

- i) Advocacy for the Ratification, Reporting and Domestication and implementation of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child at National Level;
- ii) Advocacy on the promotion and protection of the rights of the Child, in collaboration with other African Union Organs, RECs and UN Agencies.

249. Following an Experts meeting held in July 2019 in Cape Town, South Africa, it developed a General Comment on Article 22 of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child focusing on children affected by armed conflicts. It undertook a continental study on the situation of children on the move on '*mapping the situation of children on the move within Africa*' and launched the related report on 18 March 2019 during its 33rd Ordinary Session. The study recognizes that, as in the case with adults, children are not immune to both small-scale and large-scale movement of persons across the world, either alone or with their parents.

250. It considered the State Party Reports on the implementation of the Charter and made concluding Observations and Recommendations to the concerned State Parties, for their feedback and comments. So far, 39 of the 49 Countries that ratified the Charter have submitted their initial reports on its implementation. Six countries have submitted their first and second periodic reports. In 2019, the Committee considered 5 out of the seven State Party Reports and two out of the 3 Complementary Reports it had planned for the 2019 session. The remaining reports will be considered in the upcoming 34th session of the Committee scheduled to be held in November.

251. In 2019, out of the 3 planned advocacy missions on the ratification of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, only one mission to Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic has been undertaken from 28 April to 4 May 2019. It engaged with Government Officials and Partner Organizations on the ratification of the Charter. The Committee is planning to undertake another mission to Morocco in December. The ACERWC conducted Missions to Guinea Conakry, (25 to 27 September 2019), Republic of Zimbabwe (14 to 16 June 2019) and planned to conduct a mission to Liberia (6 to 8 November 2019) to monitor the status of the implementation of the concluding observations and recommendations.

252. The ACERWC mobilized Member States for the commemoration of the Day of the African Child (DAC) 2019 whose theme was “Humanitarian action in Africa-Children’s rights first” by developing and sharing a Concept Note to guide Member States and other stakeholders on how to commemorate the Day. The Continental DAC has been commemorated from 14 to 15 June 2019 in Ndjamena, Chad, along with a sensitization training workshop with media and CSOs. The training was to sensitize the Media and CSOs on the provisions of the Charter, raise public awareness on the mandate of the Committee and the existing avenues to channel and report child rights violations.

253. The ACERWC planned to organize two days’ workshop in two RECs to engage them in the popularization of the Africa’s Agenda for children 2040 and identifying appropriate mechanisms of engagement on matters related to the cross-border issues affecting children’s rights. In this regard, the Committee has engaged the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) in Libreville, Gabon from 04-06 September and the Horn and north of Africa from 31 October to 1 November 2019 in Asmara, Eritrea Africa affording the opportunity for Partner States to learn about the various child rights laws, policies and initiatives that exist within the respective RECs. At the end of the workshops, the ACERWC and the respective RECs identified joint activities and set areas of focus of collaboration on matters pertaining to children’s rights in the coming years. Further, the Committee participated in the AU-UN Human Rights Dialogue from 15 to 16 October and in the AU-EU Human Rights Dialogue on 19 October.

254. ACERWC continues to face the challenge of inadequate legislative and institutional frameworks to facilitate the implementation of its decisions, coupled with the lack of capacity for effective implementation, as well as lack of political will from some Member States to implement the decisions of ACERWC. The limited budgetary allocation to implement the decisions and recommendations of ACERWC continue to hinder the work of the Committee. Further, there is lack of collaboration among Government, Organs and other stakeholders when implementing decisions and

recommendations of ACERWC. This requires a focal point entrusted to implement them at national level and report accordingly. In this regard, the Six Member States which have not yet ratified the Charter, namely: Democratic Republic of Congo, Morocco, Tunisia, Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic, South Sudan, and Somalia, are urged to expedite the ratification of the Charter.

IV. Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

a. Advancing Gender Agenda

255. The Commission presented the 4th Edition of the AU Gender Scorecard, which were presented to 17 Heads of State and Government at the 32nd Ordinary Session of the Assembly, held in February 2019, in Addis Ababa, in recognition of progress made in implementing Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE) Commitments related to the AU theme of the year. In 2019, the Commission continued to promote the integration of the AU Common Africa Position on GEWE in international platforms and participated in the 63rd Session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW63) as well as the 74th session of the UN General Assembly held at the UN Headquarters in March and September 2019, respectively.

256. The 10th Anniversary of the AU Gender Pre-Summit was celebrated in an event co-hosted with the Egypt National Council for Women February, 2019, in Cairo, Egypt. In the same vein, in July, 2019, a Pre-Summit on "*Advancing Women and Girls Empowerment*" was convened in collaboration with the Ministry of Women Empowerment and Child Protection of the Republic of Niger together with the AU International Centre for Girls and Women's Education in Africa (AU/ CIEFFA) in Niamey, Niger, on the margins of the First Mid-Year Coordination Meeting of the AU and the Regional Economic Communities (RECs). A Solidarity Mission in Sudan was undertaken in collaboration with the Office of the Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security to support the women of Sudan in their endeavours for a democratic, peaceful and inclusive Sudan that incorporates women in decision-making at all levels. An in-country advocacy mission as well as a training on the ratification, domestication and implementation of the Maputo Protocol followed in November, 2019, in Khartoum, Sudan to support the institutionalisation of women's rights in the new government of Sudan.

257. The 4th STC on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE) was convened, along with the Africa Consultative Conference on the Review of Implementation of the 25th Anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (Beijing + 25). On Beijing + 25, the STC adopted the Africa Declaration and key messages that form part of the Common Africa Position (CAP) to be presented at the 64th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW64) at the UN Headquarters in New York in March 2020. The Africa Report will also be integrated into the global Beijing +25 report, which will be presented at CSW 64.

b. Mechanisms and Tools for Effective Implementation of GEWE Policies

258. Following the adoption of the 2018 Gender Parity Decision, the Commission designed the Gender Parity 2025 Project. A Retreat was organized in November 2019

to plan for the accelerated implementation of the Parity Project. The outcome of the Retreat was an action plan to operationalize the Gender Parity Operational Plan that was agreed to in the first Parity meeting in Dakar in July 2018. To institutionalize gender equality in policies, programmes, strategies, decisions, structures and functions of the Commission, the first ever Gender Mainstreaming Workshop for Gender Focal Persons was convened from 2 to 5 October, 2019 in Kampala, Uganda, aimed at sensitizing participants on the importance of gender mainstreaming, and enhancing their skills and knowledge on gender analysis tools for their effective application to support gender responsive programmes. The Commission also hosted a Validation Workshop of the Operational Plan, the Result Framework and the Regional Harmonization Matrix from 17 to 19 June 2019, with the participation of forty-five (45) participants from Member States and RECs.

259. In compliance with their obligations under Articles 12 and 13 of the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (SDGEA), 18 Member States and 3 RECs have submitted reports on measures taken to implement the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (SDGEA) in 2019. To address the challenge of low reporting, the Commission has developed an online reporting tool to facilitate efficient reporting on the AU gender instruments, including the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (SDGEA). This platform, will be accessible throughout the continent and serves as a single point of contact to facilitate both the monitoring and evaluation of implementation of continental and international commitments on GEWE.

260. Similarly, the Commission continued to advocate for the ratification, domestication and implementation of AU Instruments on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment. To date, 42 out of 55 Member States have ratified the Maputo Protocol on Women's Rights. In 2019, advocacy Missions on the ratification, domestication and implementation of the Maputo Protocol on Women's Rights were conducted in Sudan, Madagascar and Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic. In Sudan the mission was to support the new government to comply with its regional and international obligations to promote and protect women's rights. A capacity building training for civil society organisations was convened to build and support CSO's capacity to advocate and lobby for the ratification of the Maputo Protocol and other international and regional instruments. 40 women from across Sudan participated.

261. In order to facilitate the full operationalization of PAWO as a Specialized Agency of the AU in line with Assembly Decision *Assembly/AU/Dec.621(XXVIII)*, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed in February 2019 between the Commission and the PAWO.

262. The Fund for African Women (FAW) contributes to women's economic empowerment by providing financial supports to grassroots organisations. During the period under review, the Steering Committee of the Fund reviewed 120 proposals under the 2019 theme of "*Women in Decision Making*", out of which 20 were approved for funding.

c. **Consultations and Commemorations Aiming to Enhance GEWE Agenda on the Continent**

263. To mark International Women's Day on 8 March, 2019, the Commission, in

collaboration with the Ethiopian Ministry of Women, Children and Youth Affairs, convened 3000 women from around Ethiopia at the AU Headquarters. The celebrations were attended by H.E the Prime Minister of Ethiopia, Dr. Abiy Ahmed, under the theme “Think Equal, Build Smart, Innovate for Change towards Durable Solutions to Forced Displacements in Africa”. Earlier, on the 6th of February, 2019, the 10th Anniversary of AU Gender Pre-Summit (GPS) was celebrated in Cairo, Egypt on the margins of the Africa Pre-CSW63 Consultation meeting. The celebration was attended by around 300 participants including Ministers in charge of Gender and Women’s affairs, dignitaries of the Host country, Development Partners, UN Agencies, CSOs, and media (200 women and 100 men (66,6 % women, and 33,4% men). To enhance cooperation and strengthen partnership between the AU and UN, the two institutions organised a Senior Women Leaders Meeting in Niamey on the margins of the AU Summit in July 2019.

H. CONTINENTAL POLICIES, FRAMEWORKS AND STANDARDS

I. Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA)

264. The Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA) implemented through a partnership between the Commission, the AUDA-NEPAD, the AfDB and the UNECA, covers four main sectors including transport, energy, ICT and trans-boundary water. PIDA’s projects are estimated at \$360 billion up to 2040. For its 51 priority action projects (PAP), the cost estimate stands at \$68 billion from 2012 to 2020, or \$7.5 billion in expenditure per year.

265. Since its adoption in January 2012, PIDA PAP 1 has produced the following development impact contributing to the implementation of Agenda 2063:

- i) A total capacity of approximately 16,066km of highways were built throughout the continent;
- ii) A total capacity of 4,077 km of railways was built through PIDA projects;
- iii) In the Energy sector, a total transmission line capacity of approximately 3,506km was added;
- iv) In the ICT sector, a total of 17 countries are connected with regional fibre optic cables;
- v) Through constructed and operational PIDA projects, 112,900 jobs were directly and 49,400 indirectly created.

266. The timeframe of the PIDA PAP is 2012-2020. The Commission is currently conducting an independent review of the implementation the PIDA Priority Action Plan (PAP). The analysis will provide the basis and way forward in the formulation of the second phase of the PIDA programme. The mid-term review of PIDA provides an opportunity to examine the nexus between PIDA and the AfCFTA as well as the continent’s industrialisation agenda. The Commission is also working in collaboration with GIZ to define the corridor approach and the selection criteria. It is, therefore, expected that PIDA PAP 2 will build upon PIDA PAP 1 but will also be radically different in the way it addresses pressing needs on the continent including jobs, youth and

women, low access to energy and other basic infrastructure among rural communities. This means that apart from the usual focus on regional and continental projects, PIDA will now extend linkage with access infrastructure for rural and remote areas to ensure relevance with each and every citizen of Africa.

267. Furthermore, as a way to lay a strategic foundation for African infrastructure development for the next decade, a study that forecasts the current and future infrastructure needs will be developed, as vital input to the PIDA-PAP 2 project selection process. The Mid Term Review together with the Market and Demand Study (MDS) will form a conceptual basis and strategic framework for the development of the selection criteria for PIDA-PAP 2. The PIDA PAP 2 will be submitted to the Assembly in January 2021 for its consideration and adoption. Another innovation in the PIDA PAP 2 process is the involvement of the African Network for Women in Infrastructure (ANWIn). The PIDA-PAP 2 process aims to be more inclusive in its project selection approach. In doing this, there is a necessity to account for the needs of female infrastructure stakeholders (users, policy makers, engineers and service providers). To achieve this goal, the Commission and AUDA-NEPAD established the African Women for Infrastructure Network (ANWIN) with a view to promoting women's participation in Infrastructure development and access at the national, regional and global levels.

268. In 2019, the following advocacy activities were carried out by the Commission:

- i) Organization of the second policy dialogue conference from 24 to 26 September 2019 in Addis Ababa for the facilitation of the implementation of PIDA aimed at providing a platform for Member States to create synergies between the different implementing institutions and other stakeholders at regional and continental levels;
- ii) Organization, in collaboration with the Government of the Arab Republic of Egypt, the AUDA-NEPA and the AfDB of the 2019 PIDA Week from 25 to 29 November 2019 in Cairo, Egypt, under the theme "Positioning Africa to deliver on Agenda 2063 through multi-sectoral approaches to infrastructure development";
- iii) Organization of the fourth PIDA Journalists workshop in Brazzaville, Republic of Congo, from 3 to 5 September 2019 which the participation of 30 journalists from the continent who shared experiences and strategies to market and report on the PIDA projects in the spirit of the AU's Agenda 2063.

269. Also in 2019, the Commission and AUDA-NEPAD developed the PIDA Job Creation Toolkit to estimate labour market effects of infrastructure projects and disaggregates the jobs by country, years, sector and professional group.

II. Continental Transport Policy

a. Maritime transport

270. After nine (9) years following the adoption of the Revised African Maritime Transport Charter in Kampala, Uganda in July 2010, only 10 countries namely: Benin, Burkina Faso, Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Gabon, Kenya, Mauritius, South Africa

Togo and Gambia have ratified the Charter and deposited their instruments of ratification with the Commission.

271. The 2nd STC on Transport, Transcontinental and Interregional Infrastructure, Energy and Tourism (STC-TTIET) met in Cairo, Egypt, from 14 to 17 April 2019. It recommended to the Commission to integrate the maritime sector in the development of the next phase of PIDA. Furthermore, the PIDA Policy Dialogue which was held in Malabo, from 24 to 26 September 2019, identified the importance of the maritime transport sector as a key component for PIDA-PAP 2 integrated corridor approach.

b. Road Transport

272. In this sector, the Commission pursued its efforts in collaboration with key partners, notably the World Bank, EU and UNECA in the formulation of the Inter-Governmental Agreement on road standards norms for Trans-African Highways (TAH), including follow up actions on the Inter-Governmental Agreement on road standards norms for Trans-African Highways, adopted by the Assembly in June 2014, organization of regional dissemination and capacity building workshops, covering three regions (West, North and East) in 2016 and 2017. The remaining regions will be covered later.

273. The Commission continues to follow up of the African Road Safety Charter and the African Road Safety Charter, through formulation, monitoring and review of the African Action Plan for the Global (UN) 2010-2020 Decade of Action for Road Safety. The Formulation of the Strategic Directions for the post 2020 Decade of Action for Road Safety and the Draft Action Plan for the Decade 2021-2030 are ongoing.

274. The Commission, in the same vain, organized the 4th African Road Safety Conference from 30 October to 2 November 2019 and facilitated an African Ministers roundtable during the Global ministerial conference on Road safety, in February 2019 in Stockholm, Sweden to share the African perspective on this theme.

III. Geothermal Energy Development in Africa

a. Geothermal Energy

275. It will be recalled that the Geothermal Risk Mitigation Facility (GRMF) was established in 2012, under the cooperation with Germany and EU as a financial tool for supporting the geothermal energy development in Eastern Africa. The GRMF is hosted and managed by the Commission, capitalized with an initial amount of 50 Million Euro (the EU-Africa ITF: 30 Million and BMZ: 20 Million). In addition to the initial funds, DFID contributed 47 Million Pounds in 2014, which has however been reduced to 39 million BP in 2017. On its part, the Commission is contributing around US\$ 0.5 million annually for salary and monitoring of the GRMF operations.

276. So far, GRMF awarded total grants of US\$ 117 million to 30 projects qualified projects with a potential of 2,783 MW through five Application Rounds from 2012 to 2018. The planned investment volume by geothermal developers for the 30 projects is estimated to USD 9.2 billion. Out of 30 projects: 14 Surface Studies and 16 Drilling

Programmes are located in 6 countries: Ethiopia, Djibouti, Comoros, Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda. The total amount disbursed to developers is about USD 6 million out of USD 117 million awarded in the five (5) Application Rounds already completed. The main reasons for the low disbursement rate are the following: (i) Financial: Difficulty for developers to mobilize their financial contribution as per GRMF financial scheme; (ii) Legal: Difficulties to secure geothermal resource licensing and closing of Power Purchasing Agreements (PPAs) and lack of regulatory framework; (iii) Technical: Lack of adequate geothermal capacity in the region with the consequence of extra costs for the purchase of equipment; and difficulty of finding human capital in this specialized industry.

277. Ongoing actions and outcomes include the following:

- i) Regular consultation with the Ministry of Water Irrigation and Energy as well as the Ethiopian Energy Authority led to an effective ratification of the geothermal regulation which gives legal and institutional framework to attract private investors in geothermal resources in Ethiopia and fast track the implementation of projects;
- ii) Several consultative meeting with the public developer Geothermal Development Company and monitoring visits in Kenya allowed two projects to reach the drilling phase, a step closer to power generation, compared to 1 project since 2012, the implementation date of GRMF;
- iii) 90% of pending issues preceding the signing of 5 GRMF Grant Contracts totalizing \$15,370,590 in Ethiopia, Kenya, and Tanzania have been cleared;
- iv) \$1,097,877 have been disbursed to surface studies and drilling programmes in Comoros, Djibouti, Ethiopia and Kenya;
- v) 2 Oversight Committees organized to discuss and address the main challenges and ensure the effective operations of GRMF programme;
- vi) The Early Market Engagement through an online survey to gather geothermal projects developers' feedback Market was carried out between 14 February and 6 March 2019. The outcomes showed an increasing interest of developers in GRMF grants. The 6th Application Round will be launched in 2020 to provide additional grants.

IV. Electricity Standards

a. Harmonization of Regulatory Frameworks for Electricity Market in Africa

278. The Commission launched the project on "*Harmonized Regulatory Framework for Electricity Market in Africa*" in 2015-2016, with the development of a Strategy and Action Plan. The Strategy and Action Plan were approved by the Specialized Technical Committee of Ministers for Transport, Trans-continental and Inter-regional Infrastructure, Energy and Tourism (STC-TTIET) in Lomé, Togo, in March 2017, and by the Executive Council in July 2017. Subsequent phases of the project from 2017 have focused on implementation of the Strategy and Action Plan. In light of the above, the Commission is engaged in the following actions as planned:

- i) A continental transmission system tariff methodology and computation model, policy and technical models of mini-grids; and Guidelines for

- Minimum Energy Performance Standards (MEPS) and Energy Labelling were developed and adopted by the STC-TTIIET in April 2019;
- ii) Capacity building for power pools, regulators and transmission system operators is ongoing to develop capacity required to operate and regulate regional electricity power markets;
 - iii) Support national and regional institutions to develop required capacity and align their systems to the continental transmission tariff methodology;
 - iv) Launch the Single Africa Electricity Market at 2021 January Summit.

V. Africa Renewable Energy Initiative (AREI)

a. Operationalization of Africa Renewable Energy Initiative (AREI)

279. The African Renewable Energy Initiative (AREI) was launched by the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN) at the June 2015 Summit and the COP 21 in Paris in December 2015, to facilitate the development of 10 GW new capacity of renewable energy sources installed by 2020 and 300 GW by 2030. The AREI Board of Directors - consisting of five Heads of State and Government representing the five AU regions - provisionally approved for attribution 24 investment programmes and projects with an expected total production capacity of 1.7GW for a total of €4 billion of already planned investments.

280. These investments were prepared with the support of several technical and financial partners, notably the European Union, the French Development Agency (AFD), the KfW Group, the European Investment Bank (EIB), and the African Development Bank (AfDB). Most of these projects are currently undergoing the tender process. The AREI Board of Directors met three times in 2019 at AU 2019 January Summit on 10 February 2019 in Addis Ababa, at AU July Summit in Niger and on the margins of the UN General Assembly on 23 September 2019 in New York and agreed on 78 projects with a total capacity of 9.9 GW, representing the AREI 2020 targets.

b. Bioenergy development in Africa

281. The African Bioenergy Framework and Policy Guidelines were adopted by the Executive Council in January 2013. The following actions are ongoing:

- i) The STC-TTIIET adopted the regional bioenergy strategies and investment plans for the Central and eastern Africa regions at its meeting held in Cairo, Egypt, in April 2019;
- ii) The Commission is supporting the EAC and ECCAS to mainstream the regional bioenergy strategies and investment plans through their respective policy organs;
- iii) The bioenergy strategy and investment plan for West Africa region is underway while consultations for Southern Africa region have been held and the Terms of Reference developed;
- iv) Need to allocate resources to develop regional bioenergy strategies and investment plans for the Southern and Northern Africa regions;
- v) Need to allocate resources to design a project preparation facility for bioenergy projects as directed by the STC-TTIIET.

c. Small Hydropower and Solar Energy Development

282. Recognizing the huge potential of Hydropower and solar energy for Africa and their ability to contribute to energy access at low cost with high impact, the Commission designed in 2018, a program for small hydropower and solar energy development. The STC-TTIIET, at its meeting in April 2019, acknowledged the importance of this programme and called upon the Commission and AREI to implement it. The implementation of the program has commenced with resource assessment of small hydropower potential and development of solar energy policy framework. Procurement of consultancy services to carry out these assignments was initiated. However, the exercise is yet to start due to budgetary constraints. As a way forward, there is need to mobilize resources to implement the small hydropower and solar energy programmes in order to increase energy access through clean, low carbon pathway and contribute to inclusive and sustainable development.

283. In 2019, a workshop was conducted in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, of integrated approach to development through interaction of multi sector and multi stakeholder engagement for analysing challenges and opportunities of energy security; and jointly designing phased approach solutions. This should harness solar energy to improve accessibility, increase productive capacity and socio economic transformational.

d. Development of sustainable energy in small island developing states (SIDS) in Africa

284. African island states have unique concerns in addressing energy issues because of their location and their over dependency on fossil fuels, for the majority spending 30% of their foreign exchange earnings annually on importing fossil fuels. The Commission developed the concept for a programme on “*Renewable Energy in African Island States (REAIS)*” that was validated by the African Island States as were the Terms of reference for implementing the programme. The STC-TTIIET, at its meeting in April 2019, called on the Commission and AREI to implement it, including designing a facility to support African Island States to access financing for renewable energy projects from climate financing and other financing sources. In this regard, the following actions are envisaged:

- i) Procurement of consultancy services to carry out these assignments was initiated. However, the exercise is yet to start due to budgetary constraints;
- ii) Mobilization of resources to implement the small islands programmes in order to support them to shift from fossil fuels based energy resources to renewable energy resources.

e. Gender Mainstreaming in Energy and Modernizing Cooking Technologies in Africa

285. The Commission is committed to developing guidelines and policies that fast-track access to clean energy for all people in Africa, especially women and girls, who are disproportionately impacted by lack of access because of their socially determined gender roles. It recognizes women as not only main beneficiaries of energy access,

but also as agents of change, and therefore seeks to strengthen their prospects to properly participate in the energy sector at all levels. This is expected to contribute to the realization of Aspiration 6 of Agenda 2063, and the “*AU Strategy for Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment*” launched on the margins of the February 2019 Summit. The aim is to develop a Harmonized Policy for Gender and Energy in Africa, with the aim to design a Programme for Mainstreaming Gender in Energy.

f. Establishment of Africa-China Energy Corporation Centre

286. At the Beijing Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) in September 2018, the National Energy Administration (NEA) and the Commission signed the Memorandum of Understanding on Strengthening Cooperation in Energy. The two sides agreed to establish the China-Africa Energy Cooperation Centre (CAECC). As a follow-up, a joint Secretariat from the two sides will conduct a study towards the establishment the CAECC during 2019.

VI. Comprehensive ICT Strategy for Africa (CISA)

a. Project on Policy and Regulation Initiative On Digital Africa (PRIDA)

- ***Harmonization of measurable ICT/Telecommunications policy, legal and regulatory frameworks***

287. The Commission organized a Continental Consultative Meeting on Harmonization of ICT Policy and Regulations from 2 to 6 September 2019, with the participation of more than One Hundred Forty (140) participants, including Experts and Senior Government Officials from over fifty (50) Member States. It developed a Draft methodology for Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E). Member States selected a number of priority areas to be addressed by PRIDA project, with a two years’ roadmap. To facilitate coordination of initiatives and monitoring of ICT policies and regulations in Africa, the Commission started the design of PRIDA Digital Platform to serve as space for exchanging best practices, building Africa common positions and accessing to online trainings and updates on digital policies.

- ***African stakeholders’ active participation on the global Internet governance (IG) debate***

288. In an effort to build the capacity of African Experts and policy makers on Internet Governance (IG) and emerging digital policy issues, the Commission organized the Annual African School on Internet Governance from 5 to 9 September 2019 in N’Djamena, Chad, which was followed by the Annual African Internet Governance Forum in the same city from 10 to 12 September. Furthermore, within the framework of implementing PRIDA, a training for trainers took place in Addis Ababa from 27 to 31 May 2019.

b. Digital Transformation Strategy for Africa (DTS)

289. In 2019, the Commission engaged in the development of a comprehensive Digital Transformation Strategy (DTS) to serve as a blueprint and master plan for transforming Africa economy and society and adapt them to the reality of the digital era. The DTS for Africa builds on Agenda 2063 vision. It is conceived to be people-

centred, inclusive, comprehensive and development-oriented for a strong and sustainable African digital economy. It aims to promote the adoption of digital technologies and innovation to generate economic growth, enhance job creation, contribute to poverty eradication and address equality in access to information within African countries.

c. AU-EU Digital Economy Task Force (DTF)

290. In an effort to build Africa digital ecosystem, a High-Level Digital Economy Task Force (DTF) between the African Union and European Union was launched in December 2018. The two sides are working towards the implementation of this initiative, through the involvement of a broad variety of actors from public institutions, private firms, International Financial Institutions, Development Agencies of Member States, and civil society coming from both continents.

- ***IMT 2020/ 5G Plan for Africa***

291. The Commission, in collaboration with African Telecommunication Union (ATU), initiated consultations on 5G/IMT 2020 plan and approach for Africa. The African experts highlighted the potential of 5G networks to enable long-term digital transformation and emphasized on the capacity, speed and reliable connections. They emphasized that 5G networks can be crucial in the realization of the Agenda 2063 aspirations by making progress in key sectors such as healthcare and education. The Commission is preparing to lead the process of developing 5G strategy for Africa.

VII. African Tourism Strategic Framework

292. The Commission was requested to elaborate a continental tourism policy and harmonized standards as well as a strategy for ensuring that all the key elements and targets of the Agenda 2063 are accomplished, and the objectives realized. Furthermore, the need to strengthen the tourism function within the Commission and to establish a continental tourism organization which would coordinate tourism activities in Africa were underscored. The Commission, in collaboration with the relevant unit of UNECA, formulated the African Tourism Strategic Framework (ATSF) in line with the goal and strategies proposed within the framework of the Agenda 2063. The two organizations also prepared a proposal and draft statutes of the envisaged African Tourism Organization.

293. The Commission from 21 to 23 March 2019 convened a continental workshop to consider and validate the ATSF, which has since been presented and adopted by the Second Meeting of the STC-TTIIET held in Cairo, Egypt, from 14 to 18 April 2019.

294. The Commission urges Member States, RECs and stakeholders operating in the tourism sector to support the establishment of the African Tourism Organization, which will enhance the exchange of accurate and timely information. The Organization will promote sustainable tourism in Africa. It is therefore necessary for Member States to address the finance and investment issues and challenges at both the tourism industry and the government levels.

VIII. Harmonization of Statistics in Africa: setting up statistical institutions and implementation of SHaSA II

295. During the period under review, the Commission continued to work towards the establishment of African statistical institutions and implementation of the Strategy for the Harmonization of Statistics in Africa (SHaSA II), and has made tremendous progress in the area of statistics. The 2nd Edition of Labour Migration Statistics Report in Africa and the 2019 Edition of SDG/Agenda 2063 Report in Africa were developed and published. Technical assistance was also provided to Member States and RECs for the implementation of 2008 System of National Account; improvement of Labour Statistics; and the development of Regional and National Strategies for the development of statistics (RSDS and NSDS) in line with the Second Strategy for the Harmonization of Statistics in Africa (SHaSA 2). Annual meetings were also organized for Specialized Technical Group, namely on Governance, Peace and Security Statistics (STG-GPS) of SHaSA 2 and on External Sector (STG-ES) of SHaSA 2, followed by the 5th Conference of the African Ministers Responsible for Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS).

296. Regarding the African Union Institute for Statistics (STATAFRIC) in Tunis, it is now in full operation following the adoption of its structure during the July 2019 Summit. The 13th Session of the Committee of the Directors General of National Statistics Office was convened from 18 to 21 November 2019, Tunis, while the Official Launch of (STATAFRIC) took place on 18 November 2019. Meanwhile, negotiation have also taken place with Statistics Norway to support the activities of the Institute.

IX. Training on the African Multi-Dimensional Index

297. Despite the efforts being made by Member States and RECs on regional and continental integration in Africa, progress is still slow and much remains to be done. In that regard and in line with the recommendation of the 6th Conference of African Ministers responsible for integration into Africa, in May 2013, to develop an index that would assess progress and achievements made by Member States and RECs in integration, a series of Experts' consultative meetings between the Commission, RECs, NSOs and Central Banks were organized.

298. During the meetings dimensions and indicators of the African Multidimensional Regional Integration Index (AMRII) were defined, discussed and finalized. In 2019, AMRII was presented to the STC on Finance, Monetary Affairs, Economic Planning and Integration held from 7 to 8 March 2019, in Yaoundé, Cameroon. The STC recommended that the AMRII should be presented to Member States. In this respect, in August and November 2019, the Commission organized the first and second regional meetings to train Member States on the use of the AMRII, in Lusaka, Zambia, and Arusha, Tanzania, respectively. Other trainings will be organized in 2020.

I. GOVERNANCE HUMAN RIGHTS AND INSTITUTIONS

299. In the area of human rights and governance, the Commission carried out a number of activities in the following specific fields:

I. Elections

300. During the period under review, the Commission deployed missions to observe 15 elections that were held in Africa, in 2019, in the form of pre-electoral evaluation or long and short-term observation missions. The missions worked closely with national election management bodies and political parties. It was noted that the elections were generally conducted in an overall peaceful environment. In that context, the Commission provides assistance to Member States to improve electoral processes and promote the democratic culture.

II. Constitutionalism and the Rule of Law

301. The Commission carried out a study, including guidelines on constitutionalism, with the objective of complementing the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance, by laying down the modalities for possible amendments of national constitutions, as part of the implementation of the decision adopted by the PSC at its 432nd meeting, on the elaboration of a unified strategy to combat unconstitutional changes of government in Africa. The study is currently being presented to the policy organs for consideration.

a. Access to Justice and Promotion of the AU's Shared Values

302. The study on the inclusion of the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (ACDEG) in school curricula was finalised. Its conclusions will serve as the basis for the elaboration of a long-term strategy for the promotion of legal instruments for AU shared values, through educational institutions, with a view to entrenching the culture of democracy, good governance and respect for the rule of law and human rights in the popular culture of present and future generations. In that context, the Commission organised training courses in the Central and East African regions on the principles of the rule of law, taking into account the dialogues carried out by parliamentarians, members of the judiciary and policy-makers, in 2015 and 2016.

b. Preventive Diplomacy and Constitutionalism

303. The High-Level Group on the theme «*Democratic Governance and Preventive Diplomacy in Africa*» produced a proactive analysis of the challenges that are obstacles to the implementation of the mandate of the Commission in the area of preventive diplomacy. In the same vein, and within the framework of the Joint Programme of the Commission and the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA), a mission was deployed to Burkina Faso, from 13 to 18 October 2019. The overall objective of the mission was to enable the Commission and IDEA to explore opportunities for potential collaboration, together with the competent authorities and institutions of Burkina Faso and the G5 Sahel. One of the outcomes of the mission was the drafting of a national as well as a regional project aimed at providing technical support to institutions, in order to strengthen their resilience to the general challenge of security in the G5 Sahel region.

c. Participatory Government and Local Governance

304. The main activities carried out by the Commission in this area focused, *inter alia*, on the following aspects:

- i) Celebration of days: 7th African Public Service Day, in Nairobi, Kenya, from 21 to 23 June 2019, on the theme “The Intersection of Youth Empowerment and Migration”; African Day of Decentralization and Local Development (ADDLD), on the theme “The Promotion and Effective Implementation of Local Economic Development as a Sustainable Solution for Regional and Local Communities to Forced Migration in Africa”;
- ii) Organisation of seminars on: Building the Capacities of States Parties to the African Charter on ways to deploy the Guiding Principles for Reporting on the Integration and Implementation of the Charter; Public Service Productivity in Africa; Advocacy for the Promotion of the Signing and Ratification of the African Charter on the Values and Principles of Decentralisation, Local Governance and Local Development;
- iii) Organisation of workshops on: Capacity Building for Implementation, Monitoring and Reporting on the New Urban Agenda and SDG 11 in Southern Africa and West Africa.

III. The Fight against Corruption

305. The main mandate of the African Union Advisory Board on Corruption (AUABC) is to promote and encourage the adoption of measures and actions by State Parties to prevent, detect, punish and eradicate corruption and related offences in Africa as well as to follow-up on the application of those measures and submit a report to the Executive Council on a regular basis on the progress made by each State Party in complying with the provisions of the Convention.

306. To date, forty-two (42) countries have ratified the AU Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption and are State Parties to it. During 2019, only two Member States ratified the Convention, namely Mauritius, and Sao Tomé and Príncipe.

307. In 2019, the Board focused on the implementation of the recommendations emanating from the African Anti-Corruption Year commemorated in 2018 which provided space for strong collaboration of Member States, AU Organs, the various departments of the Commission, the African Governance Architecture, the Civil Society, Development partners and other international organizations, in raising awareness and amplifying the efforts being undertaken in combating corruption on the African continent.

308. As part of the implementation of the recommendations of the Nouakchott Declaration of July 2018, the Board dedicated the topic of Asset recovery in both the celebration of the African Anti-Corruption Day on 11 July and the 3rd Edition of the African Anti-Corruption Dialogue held in Kigali, Rwanda from 9 to 11 October 2019. Further, as a precursor to the 3rd African Anti-Corruption Dialogue, the Board conducted a survey to assess the state of anti-corruption efforts in Africa with a particular focus on asset recovery. The results of the survey which have highlighted the complexities, the nature, trends and challenges of asset recovery in Africa will inform the development of the Common African Position on Asset Recovery. The Board implemented key planned activities which included review missions; finalization of studies on the state of implementation of the AUCPCC and the review of best practices in fighting corruption within the Member States; review of the state party

reporting tool; the celebration of the African Anti-Corruption Day on 11th July and; peer to peer review. The Board also convened three ordinary sessions and one extraordinary session. The sessions facilitated the provision of strategic direction in the implementation of the activities of the Board in realizing the objectives of its Strategic Plan (2018-2022).

309. The review missions conducted were to Congo, Tanzania and Madagascar. The review missions were conducted to assess and evaluate the States Parties compliance with the Convention. The review missions enabled also the Board to engage first hand contacts with National Anti-Corruption Agencies, high governmental offices, the private sector, civil society, the media and academia on implementation trends, challenges and country specific best practises in fulfilling the provisions of the Convention. Furthermore, the Board successfully concluded on the country review reports on Namibia and Uganda. The key findings of the reviews revealed good will and commitment by the State Parties to fight corruption through enactment of appropriate legal frameworks and mechanisms as well as institutional structures. The reviews also enabled the identification of good practices as well as challenges being faced by the state party. The Board made recommendations and various courses of actions to be taken by the reviewed countries in order to accelerate the fight against corruption.

310. The Board held its first Retreat with members of the Permanent Representatives Committee, which enabled the identification of challenges and opportunities impacting the Board. The retreat provided a platform for deepened dialogue between the PRC and the Board and enhancing the working methods between the two AU Organs. The Retreat agreed on several outcomes key among them:

- i) The Board to increase its outreach and stakeholder engagement through smart collaboration, partnerships and communication;
- ii) The delivery enhancement on the Board's Mandate through implementation of strategic interventions, recommendations and provision of pertinent support to Member States on various thematic areas on combatting corruption;
- iii) Encouragement to the Board to prioritize research, learning and knowledge management as a means to build capacity of stakeholders in combating corruption; and
- iv) The Board to enhance its institutional development through strategic management by being effective and efficient and result-oriented.

311. The Board collaborated with several stakeholders, namely: GIZ on Access and Integrity – Approaches to a Strong Rule of Law; the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie (OIF) on the prevention and fight against corruption and human rights; UNDOC on asset recovery; the Commonwealth and the Independent Commission Against Corruption of Hong Kong and many other key stakeholders. All these interactions presented opportunities for the Board to contribute perspectives on new approaches to combatting corruption. The meetings further availed opportunity for the Board to raise awareness on its mandate and continental priorities in the fight against corruption.

312. The Board participated in the First Anti-Corruption Forum and African Association of Anti-Corruption Agencies Annual General Meeting held from 12 to 15 June 2019, in Sham el Sheik, Egypt. The events allowed the Board to raise awareness on its mandate and solicit support from National Anti-Corruption Agencies and other stakeholders for continental priorities in the fight against corruption. The major challenges faced by the African Union Advisory Board on Corruption in delivering on its mandate, include the non-response by Member States to host country review missions and advocacy missions, in addition to the structural and financial issues to be addressed within the institutional and restructuring reforms of the Union. The Board will continue to put more efforts on finalizing the work on the development of the Common African Position on Asset Recovery as well as finalizing the development of the Africa Anti-Corruption Methodology. As various stakeholders continue to reach out to the Board for partnerships and collaboration, the Board will reposition itself through development of long term continental programmes which are inclusive and define the priority for Africa in the promotion of the fight against corruption.

IV. Human Rights and Transitional Justice

- ***Human Rights***

313. The Commission, in close collaboration with the main African human rights institutions, developed an Action Plan for the Human and Peoples' Rights Decade in Africa, with a view to strengthening the human and peoples' rights system in Africa. The objective is to reinforce the human and peoples' rights system in Africa, while urging Member States to ratify and domesticate human rights instrument for effective implementation.

314. One of the noteworthy advancements was the adoption by the AU in February 2019, of a general policy framework for transitional justice, within which each State can elaborate an appropriate policy for the national context, geared toward promoting peace, healing past wounds, and respecting human and peoples' rights. The Commission initiated a series of actions, through the deployment of experts and the organisation of workshops, in support of various Truth, Justice, Reconciliation and Reparations Commissions, particularly in the West and East African Regions, more specifically in South Sudan. The sensitisation actions also involved business communities, with a regional roadmap prepared for businesses, within the context of implementation of the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.

315. In addition, the Commission provided technical assistance to Member States and national human rights institutions by organising forums that enabled national human rights institutions to interact with members of the PRC on issues relating to displaced persons, refugees and returnees. The forums were aimed at mobilising national institutions to contribute to curbing displacements resulting from a range of causes such as human rights violations, post-electoral violence, intolerance, sexual and gender-based violence, violent extremism, impunity, terrorism, poor use of natural resources, and corruption.

316. The project to establish a Pan-African Human Rights Institute, pursuant to the AU Assembly Declaration on the Human and Peoples' Rights Decade in Africa,

adopted in Kigali, Rwanda, in July 2016, is well underway. In this regard, the Commission has already referred legal issues on the draft statute of the Institute to the Specialized Technical Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs for consideration. Furthermore, progress has been made in the project for the construction of a permanent monument for all categories of victims of human rights violations, along with a resource centre at the Headquarters of the Union, which was decided on by the Assembly. The final design of the project has already been approved by the working group of Member States set up for that purpose. The African Union continues to commemorate human rights related events, particularly the commemoration of the genocide against the Tutsis on 7 April, and African Human Rights Day on 21 October, devoted essentially to internally displaced person and forced displacement. Lastly, the Commission organised dialogues on human rights with the African Union's international partners, particularly the European Union and the United Nations.

- ***Establishment of the Hybrid Court for South Sudan***

317. In accordance with the Communiqué of the 547th meeting of the Peace and Security Council and the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (ARCISS) held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia 26 September 2015, the Commission, in collaboration with the Transitional Government of National Unity of the Republic of South Sudan (TGoNU), has been working towards the establishment of the Hybrid Court for South Sudan *“as an African-led and Africa-owned legal mechanism, to investigate and prosecute individuals bearing the responsibility for violations of international law and/or applicable South Sudanese law, committed from 15 December 2013 through the end of the transitional period.”*

318. The Commission was encouraged by the signing of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (R-ARCSS) in September 2018, which has annexed to it, a revised implementation matrix containing, among others, a set of activities with timelines, geared towards operationalization of the HCSS. In 2019, the Commission undertook a needs assessment mission to Juba within the context of Inter-Departmental Task Force led by Peace and Security Department to identify areas of assistance by the Commission to the implementation of the R-ARCSS.

319. In view of the above, the Commission plans to execute the following activities towards the establishment of the HCSS and the overall Transitional Justice Process:

- i) Print the Arabic version of the R-ARCSS;
- ii) Convene High Level Meeting of Experts on Operationalization Hybrid Court for South Sudan;
- iii) Working visits to Juba, South Sudan; and
- iv) Consultative meeting with key representatives such as AU High Representative for South Sudan, R-JMEC, United Nations Commission for South Sudan and United Nations Office of Legal Affairs.

320. The Commission wishes to reiterate its call to the Government of South Sudan to collaborate in the signing and domestication of the MoU and to provide its support to the Commission in the overall process of establishing the HCSS in accordance with the Revitalized Implementation Matrix.

V. Implementation of Decisions on the International Criminal Court (ICC)

- ***AU's request for an advisory opinion from the International Criminal Court***

321. During the February 2019 Assembly ordinary session, the Commission reported on its implementation of its Assembly/AU/Dec.672(XXX) of January 2018 on the request for an advisory opinion from the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and to place the issue on the agenda of the 73rd Session of the UN General Assembly (UNGA). In this regard, the Commission developed the Draft Question and submitted it to the Open-ended Ministerial Committee on ICC for consideration. On the recommendations of the latter, the Assembly further requested the Commission to revisit the Draft Question, taking into account political aspects and submit the final draft to the Open-ended Committee, having allowed all Member States of the Union, the opportunity to make inputs to the draft prior to submission to the UNGA for consideration in May 2019. This assignment was accomplished by the Commission, in consultation with international legal experts. Subsequently, the Open-ended Ministerial Committee met on 29 April 2019 in Addis Ababa, to finalize the Draft Question. However, no Ministers were present and Member States were represented by designated officials from the Permanent Missions to the AU. In this regard, the representatives of Member States present, decided that the Meeting could not validly take place without the presence of at least one (1) Minister, to take ownership of the outcomes of the meeting and therefore decided to convene the Ministerial Meeting on the margins of the Executive Council Session held in July 2019 in Niamey, Niger.

322. In light of the postponement of the consideration of the Draft Question, the Commission was requested to postpone consideration of the Draft Resolution by the UNGA, pending the outcome of the meeting of the Open-ended Committee, which was held on 5 July 2019. However, there were still concerns with the low attendance of Ministers at the meeting as well as States' non-responsiveness to the Commission's request for inputs to the Draft Question. Only Egypt had provided inputs.

323. In this regard, they deferred consideration of the Draft Question and any decision on the matter to the next meeting of the Ministerial Committee, to be held on the sidelines of the UNGA. At the meeting of the Open-ended Committee held on 23 September 2019 in New York, USA, the Committee, once again, failed to secure the attendance of a single Minister and only seven (7) Member States were in attendance.

324. In order to better prepare for the seizure of the ICJ, several Member States expressed a need for the Commission to conduct an in-depth study into the case law of the ICJ in order to better predict the outcome of any advisory opinion. Nevertheless, the Working Group recommended that the next meeting of the Open-ended Committee should discuss the way forward and report to the Assembly for a decision on the way forward – either to continue pursuing the request for the advisory opinion or to postpone or even cancel the process, considering that the international community is looking to the AU for a decision on the process.

- ***AU's Amici Curiae Submission before the Appeals Chamber of the ICC***

325. In July and September 2018, the Commission, represented by the Office of the Legal Counsel, made its written and Oral Amicus Curiae Submissions, respectively, in the Appeal Case of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan against the decision of the ICC Pre-trial Chamber II for Jordan's non-compliance with the request of the Court to arrest and surrender former President Omar al-Bashir of The Sudan. The AU's Submissions focused on reiterating its long-standing position that there are no exceptions to the fundamental rule of international law on the immunity of Heads of State and requested the Appeals Chamber to hold in its decision, that the UN Security Council Resolution 1593 does not waive the immunity of President Al-Bashir.

326. On 6 June 2019, the ICC Appeals Chamber adopted a decision stating that immunities of Heads of State and Government do not have a stance before the ICC. Based on this, the Court found Jordan in violation of its obligations under the Rome Statute for failing to arrest the then President Al Bashir when he was attending the Summit of the League of Arab States in Jordan. The implication of the Appeals Chamber's judgment is that future appeals by States on grounds of immunities would not stand before the Court.

VI. Implementation of AU Decision on the Decolonisation of Chagos Archipelago

327. Pursuant to Assembly Decision of February 2019 requesting the Chairperson of the Commission, to maintain the efforts to follow up on the ICJ Advisory Opinion on the 'Legal Consequences of the Separation of the Chagos Archipelago from Mauritius in 1965' and to report on the results of these efforts in the next Assembly Session in February 2020, the Commission is following up with the Embassy of Mauritius regarding the implementation of ICJ Advisory Opinion by Britain.

328. On 22nd May 2019, the UN General Assembly voted in support of a motion setting a six-month deadline for Britain for the withdrawal of the British colonial administration from the Chagos islands and for the islands to be reunified with Mauritius. UNGA also voted to endorse an advisory opinion issued by the ICJ on 25 February, 2019, calling on the UK to relinquish its hold on the territory in order to complete the process of decolonization. The Deadline was set by the UNGA as 22 November 2019. However, UK is still holding its administration on the Chagos islands. In this regard, the Commission is consulting with the Embassy of Mauritius to publish a communique addressing the continued unlawful colonial administration of Britain on the Chagos Islands. It should also be noted that the Commission was confronted with the challenge of lack of adequate resources in carrying out this important task, issue that should be taken into account in the future.

VII. Humanitarian Issues

329. Under the patronage of H.E. Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, President of Equatorial Guinea and Champion of the theme for 2019: "*Year of Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons: Towards Durable Solutions to Forced Displacement in Africa*", the Commission carried out key activities, including the celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the 1969 Convention on Refugees, and the 10th Anniversary of the Kampala Convention, in the presence of an important gathering of high authorities of the AU and UN Specialised Agencies, as well as a cross-section of refugees. As

part of this dual commemoration, the Commission organised a visit to the Tsoré Refugee Camp in Ethiopia, during which the Champion of the theme of the year announced a fifty thousand US dollars donation for the construction of a school in the Camp. President Obiang also offered to host refugees in his country, within the framework of a resettlement plan.

330. The complexity of the refugee issue calls for the enhancement of multilateralism, in order to address the main causes of all forms of forced displacement. The African Union and its Member States, as well as the RECs, should continue to be at the centre of such multilateralism, in order to deepen reflection on the root causes of this phenomenon, and solidarity actions in the context of institutional frameworks, such as Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF). The efforts resulted in innovative policies and approaches for dealing with refugees in many countries, namely Uganda, Ethiopia, Djibouti, Kenya and Rwanda. Niger has been hosting refugees for decades, however it is also making impressive efforts to save lives through its emergency transit mechanism, to facilitate the evacuation of refugees in Libya. The African Union leads the Joint AU-EU-UN Taskforce for the protection of migrants and refugees in Libya.

331. The African Union will continue to collaborate with Member States to explore lasting solutions to the problem of forced displacement in Africa. Such solutions necessarily entail the search for synergy between good governance, development, peace and combatting climate change, in a holistic approach that includes women and youth. In order to achieve this objective, we will need to enhance the operationalisation of appropriate legal instruments such as the African Governance Architecture, and the African Peace and Security Architecture, against the backdrop of the imminent establishment of the African Humanitarian Agency.

332. In the same context, AMISOM continued to involve communities in the identification and implementation of quick-impact and peacebuilding projects (PIP) in Somalia. In this regard, AMISOM carried out several humanitarian support operations to vulnerable communities. In addition, the Mission organised project management training courses in order to improve project launch and implementation rates. However, the humanitarian situation remains fragile in some regions of the country, due to the lasting effects of climate change, which causes drought, low rainfall, and many other climate shocks. There are still urgent humanitarian needs due to the combined effects of armed conflicts and climate change.

J. ORGANS AND INSTITUTIONS OF THE UNION

African Commission of Human and People's Rights (ACHPR)

333. The African Commission of Human and People's Rights (ACHPR) is the premier and oldest human rights Organ of the African Union. The ACHPR was established in accordance with Article 30 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (the African Charter), which has been ratified by all AU Member States, with the exception of Morocco.

334. During the period under review, ACHPR has continued to receive and examine periodic state reports from State Parties on measures taken to implement the

provisions of the African Charter as well as its Protocols and other related Conventions adopted over the years, notably Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa (the Maputo Protocol) and the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (Kampala Convention). Likewise, ACHPR received and examined Communications (Complaints) which allege human rights violations under Chapter III of the African Charter.

335. Among the key activities undertaken during the period, in line with its mandate, feature:

i) The Sessions/Statutory Meetings were:

- i. The 25th Extraordinary Session of the ACHPR, held from 19 February to 05 March 2019, in Banjul, The Gambia;
- ii. The 64th Ordinary Session of the ACHPR, held from 24 April to 14 May 2019, in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt; 26th Extraordinary Session of the ACHPR, held from 16 to 30 July 2019, in Banjul, The Gambia; and
- iii. The 65th Ordinary Session of the ACHPR, held from 21 October to 10 November 2019, in Banjul, The Gambia.

ii) Communications: ACHPR received and considered twenty (20) Communications, five (5) of which were issued with Provisional Measures. It decided not to be seized of one (1) Communication. The number of complaints received shows the continuing importance of the quasi-judicial mandate of the ACHPR to individuals and groups who could not find remedy locally for violations they suffered.

iii) Review of state reports on implementation of their human rights obligations:

During its 64th and 65th Ordinary Sessions, the ACHPR examined the periodic reports of Egypt, Lesotho, The Gambia, Chad, and Zimbabwe. The review of these reports allowed the ACHPR to engage constructively with the State Parties, and to assess the current state of human rights in those States and their level of compliance with the provisions of the African Charter and the Maputo Protocol respectively.

iv) Public sessions – unique platform for direct participation of State Parties, national and specialized human rights institutions and civil society organizations, in deliberations on the state of human rights. The Public Sessions afford State Parties with a common forum for engaging in critical, but constructive exchanges on the state of human and peoples' rights on the continent. In this Forum, ACHPR has witnessed an increase in the level of participation of State Parties, up to 28 State Parties in the last two sessions of ACHPR.

v) Responding to emerging human rights issues – Urgent letters of appeal and Press statements: Over thirty-five (35) Urgent Letters of Appeal to State Parties were sent aimed at intervening in emergency situations and prevent irreparable harm being done to alleged victims of human rights violations in the

States concerned. The ACHPR received about ten (10) responses addressing the issues raised in the urgent letters of appeal.

- vi) **Advocacy for ratification of AU Instruments** - A Continental Sensitization Seminar on the Ratification of the Protocol on the Rights of Older Persons in Africa and the Protocol on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Africa was organized from 5 to 6 July 2019, in collaboration with the Government of Rwanda. The Seminar raised awareness about the Protocols and the need to expedite their ratification and entry into force. Following the Seminar, Benin ratified the Protocol on the Rights of Older Persons in Africa on 6 September 2019; Central African Republic (CAR) and Rwanda signed the Protocol on the Rights of Older Persons in Africa on 4 October 2019 and 21 October 2019 respectively; and Rwanda signed the Protocol on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Africa on 21 October 2019.
- vii) **Addressing emerging human rights issues and mainstreaming human rights into the AU policy processes:** During the 64th Ordinary Session, ACHPR launched the Study on Transitional Justice and Human and Peoples' Rights in Africa (TJ Study), which complements the African Union Transitional Justice Policy (AUTJP), which was adopted by the AU Assembly in February 2019. As a follow-up, ACHPR has started engaging the Truth, Reconciliation, and Reparations Commission in The Gambia to support the transitional justice process in The Gambia. ACHPR also contributed to the process of operationalizing the human rights mandate of the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC), as reflected in its Communique of its 866th meeting. Further, ACHPR provided advice to the Africa Group in Geneva on the ongoing negotiation at the UN for a binding instrument on Business and Human Rights.
- viii) **Implementation of decisions of the AU Policy Organs:** The Second PRC-ACHPR Joint Retreat was held from 7 to 8 February 2019, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, based on the outcomes of the Nairobi Retreat held in June 2018. This retreat is expected to be held annually. However, the Second PRC-ACHPR Joint Retreat, which was scheduled to take place from 28 to 29 November 2019, could not take place due to budgetary constraints.
- ix) **Fact-finding Mission to Libya and Sudan:** The Communique of the PSC adopted on 6 June 2019, on the situation in The Sudan, and Communique of 5 July 2019 on the situation in Libya and the plight of African Migrants in Libya, requested the Chairperson of the Commission to carry out investigation missions to these countries, with the participation of the ACHPR. The Executive Council Decision in its Decision EX.CL/Dec.1065(XXXV), also called on the ACHPR to undertake a fact-finding mission to investigate allegations of violations of the human rights of African migrants in Libya. ACHPR sent a correspondence to the Commission regarding the investigation missions and awaits further information on the next steps relating to the ACHPR's participation in the missions.

336. Among the challenges facing ACHPR the mismatch in the amount of resources and the technical capacity that is availed to the ACHPR for executing this mandate and deliver on this work load. Only half of the approved Secretariat staff (twenty-three (23) of the forty-six (46)) have been recruited. This has an impact on the effective

delivery of the mandate of the ACHPR. Moreover, while the ACHPR has been in existence for over 30 years, it has as yet to have its headquarters constructed. Several decisions of the Executive Council have been adopted to mobilize the necessary funds construction of the ACHPR Headquarters. The Bureau of the ACHPR has identified this as a priority area and to that end, held discussions with President Adama Barrow of the Gambia on 8 November 2019, who assured the ACHPR that the construction of the headquarters of the ACHPR is a priority of his administration and would work with the ACHPR for its realization including through mobilizing the required support, among others, through the AU. ACHPR will follow up actively on this issue.

337. Furthermore, there is lack of compliance by State Parties with requests for Provisional Measures or Urgent Letters of Appeal, and failure to report on the measures they have adopted to give effect to the decisions of the ACHPR where they have been found to be in violation of the provision(s) of the African Charter. During the reporting period, only one (1) State Party reported. With the establishment and operationalisation of the PRC Sub-Committee on Democracy, Human Rights and Governance, it is expected that the Policy Organs will provide the necessary resources to the Sub-Committee with a view to ensuring effective implementation of decisions/recommendations of the ACHPR.

338. For next year, the ACHPR plans a number of activities, which includes two Ordinary Sessions and two Extra-Ordinary Sessions, and the Second PRC –ACHPR Joint Retreat. Apart from sustaining its responsiveness to emerging human rights issues on the continent, the ACHPR intends to enhance its engagement with the wider AU system and State Parties including through, among others, the PRC Sub-Committee on Democracy, Human Rights and Governance, the AU Special Envoy on Youth and the Peace and Security Council. The ACHPR further aims to enhance its visibility and outreach in 2020 by ensuring that the Implementation Plan of its Communication and Media Strategy is properly implemented.

African Court on Human and People's Rights (AfCHPR)

339. As of 31 December, 2019, the Protocol establishing the Court had been ratified by thirty (30) out of the fifty-five (55) Member States of the African Union, namely: Algeria, Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Chad, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Comoros, Gabon, The Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Libya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Uganda, Rwanda, Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic, Senegal, South Africa, Tanzania, Togo and Tunisia. Of the thirty (30) State Parties to the Protocol, only nine (9), namely: Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Malawi, Mali, Tanzania and Tunisia, have to date, made the declaration under Article 34(6) thereto, accepting the jurisdiction of the Court to receive cases from individuals and non-governmental organizations.

340. During the period under review, the Court undertook judicial activities relate to the receipt and examination of judicial matters, though, inter alia, case management, organisation of public hearings and delivery of judgments, rulings and orders, with a total of fifty-four (54) new cases in 2019. The Court also undertook a number of promotional activities, aimed at raising awareness among stakeholders. These activities included, sensitization visits and seminars to Djibouti, Comoros and Zimbabwe; organisation of the 4th African Judicial Dialogue under the aegis of the

African Union, on the theme “*Tackling Contemporary Human Rights Issues: The Role of the Judiciary in Africa*,” from 30 October to 1 November 2019, in Kampala, Uganda.

341. Despite the increase in the number of cases received by the Court, there has been no new ratifications of the Protocol by Member States in 2019. This lack of progress in ratifications and non-compliance with the judgments undermine the Court’s ability and mandate to ensure the protection of human rights on the continent. It is therefore imperative that all Member States of the Union cooperate in the effective implementation of the judgments and orders of the Court as required by Article 30 of the Protocol. To ensure independence of the Court, the appointment of the Board of Trustees of the Legal Aid Fund for AU Human Rights Organs and the eventual launching of the Fund as decided by various Executive Council decisions, is of critical importance.

African Union Commission on International Law (AUCIL)

342. In 2019, AUCIL held its 17th Ordinary Session in Addis Ababa (March-April 2019), under the theme «*Constitutional Democracy, Rule of Law and the fight against corruption* ». AUCIL also convened the 8th Forum on International Law, which took place from 2 to 3 December 2019, in Addis- Ababa. It collected pluralistic contributions to already existing debates by taking stock of recent dynamics and proposals; and thereafter, drafting alternatives to move beyond challenges of constitutional democracy and the rule of law, particularly in the context of fighting corruption. The Forum provided African experts, researchers and decision-makers with an opportunity to address and discuss these issues and other related aspects. The publication of the 8th Forum Proceedings in the AUCIL Journal is also expected by the Mid-2020, thereby fulfilling AUCIL mandate to disseminate international law within and beyond the continent.

343. AUCIL also undertook various studies related to Human Rights through the appointed Special Rapporteurs. In particular, it is to be recalled that the study on the AU Model Law for the implementation of the African Union Convention for the Protection of, and Assistance to Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (Kampala Convention) was adopted through an Assembly decision in February 2018. This Model Law on the Kampala Convention is the first ever AUCIL document to be endorsed by the Member States, and is intended to be used as a resource in the drafting process of national legislation to implement the Kampala Convention at the national level. As part activities of the 2019 AU theme, it is important to coordinate with all the relevant stakeholders to develop sample instruments to be included as supplement to this Model Law.

Pan-African Parliament (PAP)

344. PAP, under the leadership of its Fifth Bureau, implemented several activities, in fulfilment of its mandate to “*ensure the full participation of African peoples in the development and economic integration of the continent.*” During the year under review, PAP organized several activities focused on the promotion of the AU theme for 2019, development of Model laws, advocacy, CSO and RECs engagement and climate change, geared toward the achievement of PAP strategic objectives.

345. The Bureau of PAP has continued to utilize every available opportunity to advocate for more ratifications of the New PAP Protocol (Malabo Protocol). This Protocol has garnered additional ratifications, taking the total number of ratifications to twelve (12), namely: Benin, Cameroon, Chad, Equatorial Guinea, The Gambia, Ghana, Madagascar, Mali, Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic, Sierra Leone, Somalia, and Togo and 21 signatures. In its resolve to fast-track the ratification of the PAP Protocol, the Bureau has assigned responsibilities to all Bureau Members, who will be leading advocacy missions to their respective regions. Through the National Speakers, the PAP has called for urgent action to sign and/or ratify the Malabo Protocol.

346. The PAP organized several activities and its main achievements included: i) The holding of the 10th Annual Speakers' Conference with the renewed commitment of Speakers of National Parliaments to take action to push for the ratification of AU treaties, particularly the PAP Malabo Protocol; and ii) the finalisation of the formulation of the PAP 2019 - 2023 Strategic Plan, which is was considered in Plenary in October 2019.

347. In line with its core mandate of ensuring an effective participation of the peoples of African in the economic development and integration of the African continent, PAP will continue to assert its relevance and proactiveness by considering and debating the issues that speak directly to the realities of the continent and the peoples of Africa. In 2020, the Pan-African Parliament is expected once more mainstream in its activities the African Union theme of the year, which is "Silencing the Guns: Creating Conducive Conditions for Africa's Development".

African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM)

348. APRM is a mutually agreed instrument voluntarily acceded to by AU Member States as an African self-monitoring mechanism on governance. In 2018 and 2019, APRM harmonized its work in governance with the Commission's departments and Organs that form the African Governance Platform and was fully integrated into the Statutory Union budget. APRM was chair of the AGA Platform for 2018-2019 and was the lead institution in producing the annual Africa Governance Report 2019, submitted to the AU Assembly in February 2019.

349. In 2019, peer reviews of Mozambique and Cote d'Ivoire were conducted at the February 2019 APR Forum. These reports candidly highlight commendable practices and governance challenges which the Heads of State committed to address. During the course of the year, APRM completed review missions to Egypt and Niger, as well as: (i) a targeted review mission to Djibouti on decentralization; (ii) two targeted review missions to Zambia on Tourism and Mineral Resources; and (iii) a targeted review mission to Namibia on youth unemployment. In 2019, the APRM also launched its Kenya, Mozambique and Uganda second review reports, and conducted training of staff at the Uganda National Planning Authority on harmonization of the APRM National Plan of Action (NPOA) that is attached to the review report, with Uganda's National Development Plan. Training included components on monitoring, evaluation and reporting of recommendations in the APRM NPOA.

350. APRM is also continually improving its governance tools including exchanging experiences and lessons with continental governance experts, and this was done at the Third Annual Methodology Forum convened in April 2019 in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt. In fulfilling its expanded mandate for reporting on governance across the continent, in addition to submitting the Africa Governance Report 2019 to the Assembly in February 2019, the APRM convened a Voluntary National Reporting (VNR) on Agenda 2030 meeting for Member States in Marrakech in April 2019 to follow up on preparations for the UN High Level Political Forum (HLPF) meeting in July 2019, in partnership with AUC, ECA, UNDESA and the Office of the UN Special Advisor on Africa. APRM convened a side event at the UN HPLF specifically on SDG 16 on governance and SDG 17 on the means of implementation, in partnership with the AU Mission in New York, with more than 10 Member States taking part.

351. In 2019, the APRM family grew further, with Botswana joining the APRM as its 38th Member State at the APR Forum on 9 February 2019, and Seychelles and Zimbabwe are planning to join at the Forum in February 2020, bringing the APRM family to 40, well on the way towards the goal of universal accession set by the Assembly for 2023.

352. The APRM review process is affected by long completion times for the country self-assessment reports, as well as elections. These challenges will be mitigated in future by the APRM's program of capacity building of national structures, which will create durable national governance structures, able to produce quality annual national governance reports (NGRs) in line with the Assembly decision of February 2019. National structures will also be able to produce state reports for AU organs and agencies, including reporting on ACDEG, as agreed with the Commission. The APRM and AGA Platform will also develop the Africa Governance Report 2021, which will include a future research perspective in the analysis of governance trends, for submission to the Assembly in early 2021. As of 31 December 2019, the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) had a membership of 37 Member States. By the end of the year 2019, the APRM had completed governance reviews of twenty-one (21) Member States, with reviews of the Sudan (first review) and Uganda (second review) completed at the APR Forum of Heads of State and Government in January 2018.

African Institute for Remittances (AIR)

353. The African Institute for Remittances (AIR), a Specialized Technical Office of the Commission, strengthened its strategic partnership with the Association of African Central Banks (AACB). The AACB Bureau accepted to be member of the Governing Board and the Consultative Forum of AIR.

354. The AIR annual platform, Diaspora Engagement Forum (AIR-DEF), has been used as a tool for the Europe-based African Diaspora Organizations to discuss ways and areas of their contribution in the efforts for social and economic development of Africa.

AIR's Technical Assistance Program is designed and implemented in AU Member States. Major achievements/Actions taken during the period under review as follows:

- ***Technical Assistance (TA) and Capacity Building to AU Member States***

355. The AIR TA program is benefitting 16 Member States including: Democratic

Republic of Congo (DRC), The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Madagascar, Malawi, Nigeria, Mauritania, Tanzania and Zimbabwe as well as six countries: Cameroun, Central African Republic, Chad, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon and Republic of the Congo through Bank of Central African states (BEAC).

- **Capacity Building**

356. The Institute holds capacity building workshops for MS with the objective of improving their capacity on remittance data collection and reporting; and putting in place appropriate legal and regulatory frameworks on remittances.

- **Stakeholders Engagement**

357. The 3rd Diaspora Engagement Forum 2019 (AIR-DEF2019) was organized in The Hague, The Netherlands. The Forum brought together Europe-based Diaspora Organizations, Diasporas/Migrants, policy makers, development partners and the private sector to discuss strategies for creating an enabling environment to up scale the potential impact of remittances. Diaspora engagement is part of the AIR's strategies in achieving its objectives of reduction of transfer costs as well as Leveraging Remittances for Development in Africa.

- **Collaboration with other Stakeholders**

358. AIR participated on the annual meetings of the Association of African Central Banks (AACB). The AACB Assembly selected a theme '*Remittances: Financing Opportunities for Africa and Roles of Central Banks*' for the continental seminar to be organized and held in 2020.

359. AIR has participated in various global and continental conferences including the Global Remittances Working Group (G-RWG), The Global Forum on Remittances, Investment and Development (GFRID) and others.

- **Research Programme**

360. Addressing reduction of costs of remittance transfer remains a key agenda for AIR given the commitment of African and European leaders, in Valletta, in 2015, "*to eliminate remittance corridors with costs higher than 5%, by 2030*" as well as the SDG 10.c on the reduction of remittances transfer costs to 3% by 2030, AIR's Research Program undertakes study IN different remittance corridors to and within Africa in a bid to understand market structures and major drivers for high transfer costs. Accordingly, a study is underway in the South Africa-Zimbabwe corridor, one of the most expensive corridors in the world. Likewise, preliminary discussions started with the Central Bank of Egypt to study corridors from the GCC countries to Egypt, the cheapest corridors in the world with average costs between 2-4%.

K. CONSOLIDATING PEACE AND SECURITY

361. **Interfaith Dialogue Forum (IFDF):** The AU- IFDF 3 was held in Chad in 2018, under the theme '*Faith in Action*'. It elected a new steering committee for the period 2018-2020, to provide leadership in practically implementing the mandate of the forum. The Steering Committee met in August 2019 in Maputo, Mozambique prior to the Pope's visit. The meeting provided a viable platform for the new steering committee to familiarize themselves on their individual projects, exchange knowledge,

create synergies, and ensure the implementation of key items on the strategic plan towards the sustenance of the interfaith dialogue in Africa.

362. **Interfaith Dialogue on Preventing Violent Extremism (iDove)** pilot project was launched in February 2017 in partnership with GiZ with the aim of using innovative youth-led approaches to highlight the soft power of religion in preventing violent extremism. By building on existing initiatives and supporting young people's engagement and ideas, iDove develops non-violent approaches and solutions that strengthen social cohesion and create a forum for exchange and learning. This initiative is unique for its bottom up approach targeting work done at the community level through civil society networks and in Africa and the diaspora, namely Europe, Middle East, and soon South East Asia. The iDove initiative developed a Youth Preventing Violent Extremism Training of Trainers (TOTs) Manual in 2018, and this year delivered through its iDovers 3 TOTs; in the Senegal (25-28 March 2019) Balkans (3-6 May 2019) and South Africa (8-11 August 2019). These ToTs took place as part of the iDove's mission to empower youth to play an active role in preventing violent extremism and building cohesive communities. iDove also carried its 3rd Intercontinental Youth Forum from 18 to 20 September 2019 in Addis Ababa with the participation of 44 youth experts from Africa, Europe and the Middle East from different backgrounds. This enable the participants to enhance their skills in agile project management, resource mobilization, and project pitching. A series of projects were developed and pitched to an audience of international and local organizations and NGOs.

- ***Full Operationalization of APSA Pillars***

363. The Commission intensified its efforts to seek durable solutions to conflicts and crises on the continent by accelerating the implementation of peace agreements already concluded by the parties in conflict zones, by strengthening the fight against terrorism and its related perverse effects, such as extremism, radicalization and transnational organized crime, as well as by combatting trafficking in drugs and persons. Furthermore, the AU Policy Framework on Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development (PCRD) has been implemented in post-conflict countries through quick-impact projects aimed at restoring livelihoods and promoting the consolidation of peace. Among the States that benefited from these efforts are Somalia, Madagascar and Mali. Activities in the areas of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, as well as others within the context of security sector reform, have also been executed in several Member States, in accordance with the PCRD.

364. Regarding conflict prevention and early warning, the Commission continued to provide technical assistance for establishing and strengthening national early warning and response mechanisms in Member States. It also provided support to six (6) Member States for capacity-building in conflict prevention and early warning. Collaboration and capacity-building programmes on conflict prevention with RECs have been implemented, including the launching of a joint AU-COMESA initiative for the prevention of structural conflicts in Zambia and in other countries. The Panel of the Wise, through its subsidiary mechanism known as FemWise-Africa, has worked to promote the inclusion of women in peace processes and to build capacity in mediation and conflict prevention. FemWise-Africa has provided training and capacity building for its members. Some of the women who were trained have been deployed to support

peace-making efforts in certain Member States like Sudan and South Sudan.

365. Under the African Union Border Programme (AUBP), the Commission provided support to sixteen (16) countries in their delimitation, demarcation and reaffirmation exercises, as well as in the promotion of cross-border cooperation.

366. The Youth for Peace in Africa Programme, which was launched last year, aims to implement Article 17 of the African Youth Charter, in a bid to facilitate meaningful participation of African youth in all facets of peace and security efforts. A study is underway to determine the roles and contributions of African youth in promoting peace and security on the continent.

367. The Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) is continuing its offensive and defensive operations against the Boko Haram terrorist group, since it was commissioned in July 2015, with 10,772 soldiers from Benin, Cameroon, Niger, Nigeria and Chad. At the present time, security in most of the zones in the MNJTF's area of operation are relatively calm, although the situation remains unpredictable. Boko Haram continues to operate in small groups and to focus on islands in Lake Chad and surrounding areas, as well as to engage in repeated attacks which cause massive displacement and damage to property. It is important to commend the MNJTF troop-contributing countries (TCCs) and the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) for their efforts, which have severely damaged the Boko Haram terrorist group. However, it is imperative to mobilize resources for post-conflict reconstruction for the purpose of reviving communities in the Lake Chad Basin.

368. Regarding the continued strengthening of the African Standby Force (ASF), the Commission worked closely with Member States, RECs/RMs and other stakeholders to make the ASF fully operational. A new concept of operation and a new doctrine have been developed and are being finalized which will facilitate adaptation to the changing landscape of peace and security in Africa. For its part, the PSC, with the support of the Commission, continued with the planning for the joint retreat with the peace and security governing bodies of RECs/RMs scheduled in early 2020. Furthermore, from 29 August to 3 September 2019, Defence Ministers of volunteer countries of the African Capacity for Immediate Response to Crises (ACIRC) held a meeting in Pretoria to discuss the status of ACIRC in relation to the ASF and recommended that a meeting of ACIRC Heads of State and Government be held on the sidelines of the 34th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the Union. It should be stated here that all Member States that have voluntarily joined the ACIRC deserve to be commended for their pan-African commitment to promoting peace, security and stability in Africa.

369. Moreover, the PSC, working diligently on the implementation of the APSA and the AGA, remains fully seized of the various conflict and crisis situations, as well as of thematic issues related to peace and security. With the support of the Commission and other relevant stakeholders, the PSC has taken important decisions to prevent and resolve conflicts/crises.

370. The situation in Libya remains worrying. The AU continues to work closely with the United Nations and other international and regional stakeholders to find a lasting solution to the Libyan conflict. Consultations are continuing with the Secretary-General

of the United Nations to implement the decision of the AU High Level Committee on Libya regarding the appointment of a joint AU/UN envoy for Libya. At its 883rd Meeting held on 27 September 2019, the Peace and Security Council approved the proposal to appoint a joint African Union/United Nations envoy for Libya to streamline efforts geared towards the resolution of the Libyan crisis.

371. In the Comoros, the situation has been marked, in recent months, by political tensions between the ruling party and the opposition. In view of this political context, I therefore issued a statement inviting the Comorian authorities and all other Comorian actors to exercise restraint and to engage in an inclusive dialogue in order to preserve the gains already made in the archipelago following a long period of political crisis. I urged the authorities and other stakeholders to ensure that all post-election conflicts are resolved within the framework of the existing regulatory mechanisms.

372. During the reporting period, Somalia continued to make progress in establishing the federal system. Despite certain difficulties, the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) and the Federal Member States (FMS) have made efforts to improve their relations, particularly regarding electoral issues in some of the federated States. This trend augurs well for preparing the ground for the general elections scheduled for 2020/2021. AMISOM continues to work closely with Somali security forces, particularly as part of its mandate to assist the Federal Government in implementing its national programmes, notably the Somalia Transition Plan and the Somali National Security Architecture. AMISOM also continues to protect population centres and critical infrastructure, especially the main supply routes. At the same time, the combined operations of AMISOM and Somali security forces have reduced the operational capability and supply channels of the Al-Shabaab terrorist group. However, the group remains a threat, as evidenced by attacks against civilians, AMISOM and Somali security forces. It is important that Somali forces prepare to effectively take over from AMISOM whose departure from Somalia has been scheduled.

373. Following the coup d'état that led to the overthrow of President Hassan Omar al-Bashir and his government on 9 May 2019 as a result of a popular uprising related to the increase in the price of bread, the PSC issued a public statement on 15 April 2019 inviting the Transitional Military Council (TMC), which had taken control of the country, to set up a civilian transitional authority, and failing which Sudan would be suspended from participating in all activities of the AU, in accordance with relevant texts applicable to unconstitutional changes of government. During my visit to Sudan, I discussed with all stakeholders the need to restore the civilian regime. In May 2019, I also appointed a special envoy, Ambassador Mohamed Hassan Lebatt, to work closely with IGAD and stakeholders on the ground to seek a way out of the crisis. Within the framework of IGAD, Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed visited Sudan on 7 June 2019 and subsequently appointed Ambassador Mohammed Dirir as mediator in efforts to resolve the crisis.

374. As the Sudanese army was unable to take the necessary measures to set up a civilian transitional authority within the deadlines set by the PSC, the latter, on 6 June 2019, suspended the Republic of the Sudan from all activities of the AU. The PSC also reiterated its call for the formation of a civilian-led transitional authority as the only way to lift Sudan out of the current crisis. The positive developments in the political situation in Sudan since the suspension decision led the PSC to lift the suspension on 6

September 2019, thus allowing Sudan to regain its position in the Union. I comment the efforts of Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok towards the stabilization of Sudan. In this context, it is essential that the AU continue to appeal to the United States Government to remove Sudan from the list of States sponsoring terrorism in order to facilitate the socio-economic recovery and development of the country.

375. Since the signing, on 12 September 2018, of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (R-ARCSS), the Commission has continued to support stakeholders and IGAD in their efforts to effectively implement the Agreement. As part of the Commission's efforts, Ambassador Smaïl Chergui, Commissioner for Peace and Security, led a mission to South Sudan on from 10 to 11 May 2019 for consultations with stakeholders on the need for its implementation without delay and for subsequently establishing an interim government. He was accompanied by a team comprising Mr Jean-Pierre Lacroix, UN Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations, and Dr. Smaïl Wais, IGAD Special Envoy for South Sudan. The team also included Ambassadors of the High-Level *Ad Hoc* Committee for South Sudan, namely Chad, South Africa, Nigeria and Rwanda, as well as the representative of Algeria. The team drew the attention of the parties to the urgent need to fully implement the R-ARCSS in letter and spirit, the only way to end the crisis in their country.

376. The first face-to-face meeting between President Salva Kiir and Mr. Riek Machar since the signing of the Revitalized Agreement took place in Juba on 9 and 11 September 2019. They later met on 21 October 2019. At both meetings, the two personalities discussed urgent issues concerning the State, notably security arrangements, the number of states and their delimitation, as well as the funding needed to speed up implementation of the extension of the pre-transition period preceding the formation of the Revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity (R-TGoNU), which ends on 12 November 2019. I remain confident that the South Sudanese, with the support of IGAD, the AU, neighbouring countries and the entire international community, will rise to the challenges facing their country and therefore restore lasting peace and stability.

377. Regarding developments in Darfur, UNAMID continued its operations while reducing its staff. UNAMID continues to focus its support on: (a) the peace process, (b) the establishment of the peace support mechanism which should have been signed by December 2019, and (c) the Peace Commission. It is therefore important that adequate resources be made available from the Mission's current budget, to deal with these immediate priorities. Given the commitment of both the AU and the UN to support the Sudanese peace process, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) met on 10 October 2019 and decided that UNAMID would maintain the same number of uniformed and civilian staff. In support of the decisions of the PSC and the UNSC, Ambassador Smaïl Chergui, Commissioner for Peace and Security, and Mr Jean Pierre Lacroix, UN Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations, made a visit to Sudan from 7 to 9 October 2019. During that mission, they discussed with Sudanese leaders and reaffirmed the continued support of both institutions during the transition period.

378. The situation prevailing in the States of South Kordofan and Blue Nile is a source of major concern. The Commission, in consultation with IGAD, continues to

monitor the situation closely and to take appropriate initiatives.

379. The Horn of Africa continues to record positive developments, following the new chapter opened by Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, who is working with other regional leaders to place this region on the path to lasting peace, as well as to sustainable development and integration. The Commission has developed a regional strategy to address the many challenges in the Horn of Africa. However, developments in the Gulf region, particularly the war in Yemen and its impact, have aggravated the insecurity problems in the Horn of Africa. The increasing competition between countries in the Gulf region, as well as between other external powers seeking to exert their influence in the region, continues to fuel tensions in the area and to undermine AU efforts to help stakeholders in the region to meet the challenges they face.

380. In Mali, the political situation is still dominated by efforts made to implement the Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation, as well as for the organization of the inclusive national dialogue for purposes of the constitutional and institutional reforms necessary for transforming the Agreement into national legislation. The signatory parties have taken steps to accelerate the implementation of key measures in the agreement. With support from the AU, progress has been made in the accelerated demobilization, disarmament and reintegration process, with the transfer of over 1,000 armed combatants from the Coordination of the Azawad movements and the training platform before they were formally integrated into the Malian Defence and Security Forces (*FDSM*). It is necessary to emphasise the urgent need to redeploy reconstituted units in order to restore State authority in northern Mali, including the return of civilian administration and restoration of basic services, following recent legislation to establish the Northern Economic Development Zone, especially in Kidal Region. Mr Pierre Buyoya, High Representative of the AU for Mali and Head of MISAHEL, as well as other regional actors, are actively supporting the Malian parties in the implementation of the Agreement.

381. The situation in the Sahel region continues to mobilize international efforts, including those of the AU. The almost daily attacks in Burkina Faso, increasing inter-communal violence in the region and the spread of extremist and terrorist attacks in the area from the south to the Gulf of Guinea are a source of deep concern for the AU. Countries in the region, including those of ECOWAS and WAMU, are taking decisive action. The Extraordinary Session of ECOWAS, held in Ouagadougou on 14 September 2019, decided to establish a billion-dollar fund over five years to finance a plan of action to fight against terrorism and violent extremism. The Commission attended the Summit and declared itself ready to support the plan of action. During the reporting period, I constantly advocated for appropriate, predictable and sustainable financing and logistical support for regional security arrangements such as the G5-Sahel and the Multinational Joint Working Group, based on African and regional ownership and a holistic approach to the situation in the Sahel.

382. The general situation in the Central African Republic is marked by a decrease in violence throughout the country since the signing of the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic (*APPR-RCA*). The effective redeployment of State authority is ongoing in several localities in the provinces. For example, all 16 prefects have assumed duty, and 66 sub-prefects out of the 71 provided for have been appointed. The formation of joint units, involving the security,

the Central African Armed Forces and armed groups was launched on 16 October in Bouar, in the north-west of the country, in the presence of Faustin Archange Touadera, President of the Republic, who was accompanied by several ministers and numerous organizations representing the international community. On the humanitarian front, UNHCR reported that, from January to September, it noted the assisted spontaneous return of over 357,000 refugees and displaced persons to their respective regions, despite the deplorable situation in the Birao camp. Humanitarian needs have reduced from US \$ 2.9 million to US \$ 2.6 million and 30,000 persons will return to their regions by 2020, according to trends published by UNHCR.

383. Although Government's commitment to the Peace Agreement is confirmed, there are still challenges on the side of the armed groups. Several cases of violations of the Agreement by the signatory armed groups were noted, in particular on 21 May 2019 by the *Retour, Réclamation et Réhabilitation* (return, reclamation and rehabilitation, 3 R) group in September and October 2019, the clashes in Birao between the groups that signed the Agreement, notably the *Mouvement des libérateurs centrafricains pour la justice* (Central African Liberators for Justice Movement (MLCJ)) and the *Front Populaire pour la Renaissance de la Centrafrique* (Popular Front for the Renaissance of the Central African Republic (FPRC)), which resulted in many deaths that we strongly condemned.

384. The African Union and partners of the Central African Republic have unceasingly encouraged the Government and the Central African parties to promote a climate of trust for the effective implementation of the Peace Agreement. From 4 to 7 October 2019, the Commissioner for Peace and Security of the African Union, the UN Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, and the Director General-Africa of the European Service for External Action of the European Union conducted their second joint mission to the Central African Republic. After their consultations with the President of the Republic, Faustin Archange Touadera, and the actors concerned, the three officials called for respect of the commitments while implementing the Peace Agreement, appealed to the international community to strongly mobilize to raise funds and to support the 2020-2021 elections.

385. My Special Representative is in constant contact with all Central African stakeholders and assists them in the implementation of this historic agreement. I am delighted with the launching of the pilot training of mixed units in Bouar in the north-west of the country, and I urge the partners of the CAR to continue to provide support to ensure the success of this process, which will speed up the DDR process. Lastly, I call for the active solidarity of AU Member States and the international community to provide their technical and financial support for the organization of the 2020-2021 elections, and to support the implementation of socio-economic development projects as well as the consolidation of peace in the Central African Republic.

386. The political situation in Guinea-Bissau remains a matter of concern, despite the smooth conduct of the parliamentary elections of 10 March 2019, which reflected the hope for resolving the recurrent institutional and political crises experienced by the country since 2015. The refusal by the President of the Republic to appoint Mr. Domingos Simoes Peres, President of the *Partido Africano para a Independência da Guiné e Cabo Verde* (African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde - PAIGC), which won the legislative elections, to the post of Prime Minister, plunged

the country into a new crisis, aggravating the institutional crisis linked to the composition of the bureau of the People's National Assembly (ANP). Thanks to the collective efforts of the Peace and Security Council of the AU and of ECOWAS, the President of the Republic appointed a new Prime Minister and set 24 November 2019 as the date for the first round of the presidential election and 29 December as the date for the second round. The term of office of the President of the Republic has also been extended and a public prosecutor appointed. The instability of the parliamentary majority and mistrust within the PAIGC-led government could compromise its duration, all of which jeopardize the vote on the government's budget.

387. The presidential elections of 24 November 2019 were held, despite financial and logistical constraints. Indeed, despite donor contributions, a deficit of about \$ 1.8 million out of the \$ 6 million had to be filled. On 15 October 2019, the Supreme Court validated 12 of the 19 independent candidates supported by political parties. At the end of the first round, two candidates remained for the second round which is set for 29 December 2019, namely Domingo Simoes Pereira (47%) and Umaro Sissoco Embaló (27%). Rising ethnic considerations, trade union demonstrations and perceptible tensions within the ranks of the military, coupled with drug trafficking and transnational crimes involving suspects linked to Al-Qaida-affiliated terrorists are creating a worrying situation in the country. The political and institutional crisis in Guinea-Bissau is a constant preoccupation for the continent and the international community. For decades, the Commission, in collaboration with ECOWAS and the international community, has multiplied initiatives and met with stakeholders individually and collectively to build lasting peace between brothers and sisters in Guinea-Bissau. But it is unfortunate to note that, with each agreed solution, other crises follow. This cycle of crises condemns generations to structural impoverishment without any prospects for them to improve their living conditions. It is time for political actors to give absolute priority to the interests of their country before any other consideration and to pledge to put an end to the cyclical institutional and political crisis that has undermined the development of Guinea-Bissau for decades. I appeal to all Member States and to the international community to provide material and financial support for the proper conduct of the presidential elections of 29 December 2019 and substantial support to the government that would be elected.

388. With regard to the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework Agreement (PSCF) for the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and the region, the AU Liaison Office for the Great Lakes Region and Burundi has contributed to the effective implementation of its security, political, diplomatic and economic dimensions. The synergy of action between my Special Representative and other Special Envoys in the region has consolidated the positions developed by the partners in their approach to the political and security situation in the Great Lakes region. This harmonization has facilitated a shared vision between the African Union (AU), the United Nations (UN), the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) on countering negative forces, repatriating unarmed combatants and neutralizing the *Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda* (Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda, FDLR) and the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF). In the same vein, I would like to commend the efforts of the DRC authorities, in collaboration with the Commission and the World Health Organization (WHO), to

contain the Ebola outbreak.

389. In Burundi, the AU Liaison Office supported the preparation of the mediation process of the Inter-Burundi Dialogue led by the East African Community (EAC), within the framework of the Joint Technical Working Group (JTWG). The latter held several consultations with all stakeholders, including the Government of Burundi, opposition members inside and outside the country, civil society organizations, the media, youth and women. In addition, the Commission helped to monitor the human rights and security situation through its observers and military experts. Human Rights Observers (HROs) work in collaboration with relevant government agencies and departments and other stakeholders such as civil society organizations, UN agencies and diplomatic missions. Military experts (MEs) continue to monitor the overall security situation and engage with stakeholders, including government actors. In accordance with their mandate, the HROs and MEs have provided support for targeted training for higher education institutions, legal practitioners, women's and youth groups.

390. The Gambia has continued to enjoy political stability since the return to constitutional order in the country. Significant progress has been made in terms of reforms. The institution and establishment of the National Commission on Human Rights and the Truth, Reconciliation and Reparations Commission, among others, are indicators of the Government's determination to promote stability in the country. Similarly, the African Union, through its Technical Support to The Gambia (AUTSTG) team, provided technical support to thematic areas such as Security Sector Reform (SSR), rule of law and transitional justice. This support capped with the formulation of the first national security policy ever developed by The Gambia, which was adopted in June 2019. The AU is currently working with ECOWAS and other partners to provide support to The Gambia, in the design and implementation of all institutional reforms.

AU SPECIAL ENVOY ON WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY

391. The activities of the Office of the Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security for the year 2019 were conducted along two major strands within her mandate, namely Bridging the gap between policies and their implementation and enhancing the role and leadership of women in peace processes. This report covers the following activities:

a. Bridging The Gap Between Policy and Implementation

392. Launch of the Continental Results Framework (CRF) on 4 February 2019, on margin of the 32nd Assembly of the AU Heads of State and Government and subsequent dissemination meetings in New York during the 63rd Session of the Commission on the Status of Women in New York from 11th -15th March, 2019 and Namibia, on 10-11 April 2019.

393. The Office of the Special Envoy also launched and presented of the Second Report of the Chairperson on the status of implementation of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda in Africa, to the Peace and Security Council at its annual open session on Women, Peace and Security on 17 October 2019, the report received many positive comments from the Council including on the potential to create a base for

Member States to streamline the role of women on peace and security issues in national programmes. The Council reiterated its call to AUC to institutionalize the Office of the Special Envoy on women, Peace and Security, in the context of undergoing AU reforms. In preparation for the second report a meeting is scheduled in Dakar in December 2019 in Dakar, Senegal from 17 to 19 December 2019.

394. The Special Envoy participated in the Open debate of the United Security Council on Women, Peace and Security on 29 October 2019. The open debate was convened under the Presidency of the Republic of South Africa.

b. Enhance The Role and Leadership Of Women In Peace Processes

395. The “African Women Leaders Network” (AWLN) is a ground-breaking movement of African women leaders, jointly supported by the African Union Commission (AUC) and the United Nations (UN), through the leadership of the AUC Chairperson. The Offices of the AU Special Envoy in fulfilment of her mandate to coordinate the work of the Network has undertaken a number of activities with the aim to enhance the role and leadership of Women. Including the following:

- i) The Third Steering Committee in Monrovia, Liberia AWLN Steering to strategize on how to implement the flagship projects identified for each pillar of the Network;
- ii) Launch of the African Women Leaders Network (AWLN) Friends in Addis Ababa in June 2019 to provide partners with a formal mechanism through which AWLN initiatives will be technically and financially supported;
- iii) Intergenerational retreat on Women leadership.

396. In Nairobi, Kenya from 16 to 18 August, 2019, under the theme: Women Leadership in Africa: “Building the Africa We Want Together”. The retreat adopted also a Roadmap 2020 – 2022 as part of the AWLN Young Women’s leadership pillar for meaningful young women’s engagement and participation in governance, peace and security, with the support of Senior Women Leaders:

- i) The African Women Leadership Funds Advisory Board Meeting on 8 November 2019. To review the progress made in structuring the Fund, selecting fund managers; and agree on fundraising strategies;
- ii) Solidarity Mission to Sudan: 26 to 30 August 2019. The Special Envoy undertook a Solidarity Mission to Sudan from 26 to 30 August, The Solidarity Mission with the aim to support women of Sudan in their endeavours for a democratic, peaceful and inclusive Sudan that incorporates women in decision-making at all levels. An indicator of the success of the mission is the fact that a new government was announced few days after the solidarity mission and comprised 4 women ministers, including the first ever Minister for Foreign Affairs;
- iii) Joint AU- UN Joint Solidarity Mission to the Horn of Africa from Monday 21st to Saturday 26th October 201 to support initiatives in the region with the view to strengthening women’s leadership and participation in peace, security and development, in line with AU Agenda 2063. A key outcome of the mission was

the Establishment of the AWLN National Chapter in Ethiopia, under the leadership of the President of the Federal Republic of Ethiopia, H.E. Sahle-Work Zewde.

397. The Office continues to actively carry out its mandate and mission, under the overall leadership of the chairperson of the Commission.

398. Despite the delivery on its mandate, the Office continue to work under strenuous conditions and it is in this perspective that the Peace and Security council has reiterated its call for the Office to be institutionalized on Women, Peace and Security, to afford the Office with further support, particularly in terms of Human capacity.

399. In 2020, the Office will focus on National Action plans with proximity work with Member States to attain 50% of Member States with Action Plans, but also more countries reporting using the Continental Results Framework. The Office will also convene the second Forum of Regional Women, Peace and Security Forums and the third AWLN in the continued endeavour to enhance the role and leadership of Women towards the transformation of Africa in a peaceful, prosperous and inclusive continent, where no one is left behind.

L. ENHANCING AFRICA'S ROLE AND POSITION IN AFRICA AND GLOBALLY

I. Engaging Civil Society and the Diaspora

- **ECOSOCC**

400. Pursuant to the decision of the Executive Council, the ECOSOCC Secretariat was transferred to Lusaka, Republic of Zambia. The Headquarters Agreement between the AU and Zambia was signed in July 2019, in the margins of the Summit in Niamey, Niger. The recruitment process also began and the first batch of staff appointed have already been deployed. In view of the reform of ECOSOCC requested by the Executive Council, a study thereon was finalised and will be submitted for consideration by the policy organs.

401. Following the recruitment of the first group of new staff for the Secretariat in the 3rd quarter of 2019, and in preparation for their imminent deployment to the new Secretariat in Lusaka, a second interdepartmental team undertook a final evaluation mission from 13 to 15 November 2019 to establish the readiness of the new Secretariat facility in line with the provisions of the Host Agreement. The evaluation mission was followed immediately by an installation mission composed of various technical team from 15 to 30 November 2019 with a mandate to ensure that the new office premises were appropriately furnished and equipped in order to support the operational requirements of the Secretariat. The Commission is pleased to report that the Secretariat of ECOSOCC has relocated to Lusaka Zambia and have started operation.

- ***African Diaspora Volunteer Corps Project***

402. The pilot project for the establishment of an African diaspora volunteer corps was initiated by a three-month training course for young volunteers from the diaspora from January to March 2019. The selection of these young persons followed the same rules as those governing the recruitment of young volunteers serving within the Commission. These young people, who came from the regions of the Americas and the Middle East, were deployed to the AU Permanent Mission to the United States in Washington, D.C., and to the Commission in Addis Ababa. At the end of this first professional experience, the Commission would like to make the following recommendations: (i) integrate the youth project of the diaspora into that of the AU Youth Volunteers Corps; (ii) ensure proximate deployment by sending the youth to AU Offices located in the diaspora regions where they reside. The main limitation of this pilot project is that it excluded all members of the African diaspora who do not hold passports issued by their countries of origin. The Commission is working towards harmonizing Member States' laws on granting dual nationality.

- ***African Diaspora Investment Fund***

403. The Commission is helping to implement an innovative financial strategy to boost diaspora investment, in line with the 5 flagship projects adopted at the Diaspora Summit held in South Africa in May 2012. This strategy is based on the creation, marketing and issuance of bonds, mutual funds, as well as endowment and trust funds through the African Diaspora Finance Corporation (ADFC). This strategy was validated by Member States, relevant AU offices, the private sector, development banks and financial experts at a meeting held for that purpose.

- ***Participation of the Diaspora in the Productive Economy***

404. The Commission launched a programme to improve the performance of African Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) on the continent and in the Diaspora, as advocated by the May 2012 Diaspora Summit mentioned above. This project focuses on the acquisition of targeted skills and resources to help these enterprises expand in order to create new jobs. This programme was conducted from 16 to 18 August 2019 in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, with a focus on leadership training. It was part of a series of actions devoted to training, self-learning, counselling and follow-up, which led participants to reflect on their own functioning and strategy. Thus, they acquired new knowledge that has helped them to execute the development plans of their enterprises in a realistic and individualized manner. Most of these enterprises will make a real impact on their social environment. It should be noted, however, that the most important challenge facing SMEs remains access to finance, as their attractiveness to investors is still low.

- ***Involving the Diaspora***

405. The African Union is strengthening its relations with the Diaspora by involving it in Regional Consultative Conferences (RCCs) which serve as a platform for advocacy and policy formulation. In general, the RCCs constitute a framework that serves to improve convergence between national and continental diaspora strategies,

in line with the recommendations of the Global African Diaspora Summit held in 2012, on the one hand, and the promotion of Agenda 2063, decisions and themes of AU Summits, on the other hand.

- ***Strengthening the Capacity of Member States to Assess Diaspora Engagement***

406. A Diaspora Engagement Self-Assessment Tool (DESAT) has been designed to serve as a mechanism to help Member States monitor and report on the level of commitment/involvement of their respective Diasporas. The Commission will use the results of this self-assessment tool to draw lessons and organize capacity-building sessions to enable Member States meet the challenges they face. This tool was rolled out in a pilot phase in 11 Member States. The report showed shortcomings and highlighted positive examples of best practices in the process of engaging the diaspora on the continent. In the same vein, the panel discussions organized with the African diplomatic corps, notably those in Brussels, Belgium, and Beijing, China, in November 2019, helped to enhance understanding of the role of the diaspora, on the one hand, and to stress the expected role of African diplomatic missions in boosting the commitment of African Diasporas, on the other hand. The ultimate aim is to urge the African diaspora to proactively play its role in the development process of the continent by achieving a good understanding of Agenda 2063.

- ***Organizing the Work of the Commission with the Diaspora***

407. The Commission structured its work on the diaspora around the following three main regions of the world: (i) the Americas and the Caribbean; (ii) Europe, and (iii) the Middle East, Asia and Oceania. A summary description of the main activities executed in each of these regions is presented below.

Americas and the Caribbean:

408. May 2018: Establishment of the African Union Network in Canada to facilitate the development, planning and joint implementation of development initiatives in cooperation with the African Diaspora in Canada. During the year under review, this network continued its campaign to give greater visibility to the African Union in Toronto, Canada. Consequently, on the occasion of the 56th Anniversary of the OAU, events were held from 22 to 25 May in the Ontario Parliament and the AU flag was indeed raised there on 25 May 2019 on this occasion. The network also launched the Diaspora Youth Entrepreneurship Campaign from 11 to 13 October 2019 to engage the private sector in Canada to support the Chairperson of the Commission's Initiative, "1 million by 2021".

409. February 2019: The Commission undertook to expand the diaspora network to the United States of America, particularly the west coast and the mid-western area.

Europe

410. The Commission put in place a stakeholder mechanism to stimulate more active commitment on the part of the diaspora. As part of this mechanism, several strategic meetings were held, including:

- i) The African Diaspora Youth Forum in Europe (ADYFE) with UNIDO, from 13 to 15 January 2019 to discuss the modalities of a strategic partnership focused on youth involvement in the development of the continent and possibilities for the reintegration of illegal migrants from the Diaspora;
- ii) Board of Directors of the African Diaspora Development Platform (ADEPT) held in Brussels, Belgium, from 1 to 2 April 2019. ADEPT is the umbrella organization for the diasporas responsible for policies in Europe, which was chosen to represent the African diaspora in Europe from 2018 to 2020;
- iii) Forum of International Solidarity Organizations for Migration (FORIM), which brings together more than 1,000 Diaspora sub-organizations in France;
- iv) Round table discussion between main stakeholders of the Diaspora and the Commission on 4 July 2019 in London, United Kingdom, focusing on how to increase the visibility of the Union and the involvement of the Diaspora;
- v) One-day workshop for networks and organizations of the African Diaspora held in Frankfurt, Germany, on 3 September 2019, to enhance the visibility of the various Diaspora actors, and to define specific areas of engagement with the AU. The Commission is also working with the Diaspora to develop a narrative to counter the rise of identity and xenophobic populist discourse in Europe. With the African Diaspora in Vienna, the Commission organized a panel discussion with the Austrian Ministry of Education to deconstruct the vexatious message conveyed by a defamatory documentary on Africa intended for primary schools in Vienna.

Middle East, Asia and Oceania

411. Contact with the Middle East took place in July 2019 with a visit to Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates. Due to the strong presence of the African Diaspora in the Middle East and the Gulf region, the purpose of the visit was to engage with the employment authorities. This mission culminated in the organization of a forum on migration issues with experts from Africa and the Middle East. The forum ended with the adoption of a consultative mechanism between the AU and the Middle East.

412. The Regional Consultative Conference for Asia was held in China, in November 2019. In addition to representatives of the Commission, the AU Office in China, the members of the African diplomatic corps accredited to China and the Diaspora also participated in the Conference. A roadmap for relations between the AU and the African Diaspora in China was developed.

413. The Pan-African Australasian Diaspora Network (PAADN) continues to grow. It has sponsored several African events focusing on women and youth. The non-integration of African youth into the humanitarian system of the region is a matter of concern. The workshop with the PAADN on integration and social cohesion was held in November 2019, and focused on knowledge sharing and the development of a pilot project to build on the knowledge of the AU and the continent in these areas.

II. Enhancing positive image through economic self-reliance and culture

Encyclopaedia Africana Project

414. Workshops of the Encyclopaedia Africana Project have been held in accordance with the objectives set forth in the First 10-Year Implementation Plan of Agenda 2063. At these workshop, discussion was centred on the roadmap for project financing, the reconstitution of the Scientific Committee to produce the scholarly content for the Encyclopaedia, the role of the African Union in the project implementation, and the structure and content of the next edition of the Encyclopaedia. The discussion also was on transforming the EAP Secretariat in Ghana to a pan Africa institution on the establishment of the Scientific Committee to develop the framework for the next edition of the Encyclopaedia Africana. During the February Summit 2019, the project was approved as a flagship programme of the African Union. A planning meeting with the AU and the EAP secretariat scheduled in December to inform detailed project planning and implementation for the two years leading to the completion of the project.

III. Africa's Role in Global and Regional Institutions

- ***Coordinating Africa's global engagement on trade***

415. The Commission continued to follow up on various international trade issues that are relevant to Africa. In this regard, it accompanied Member States eligible for the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) in the utilization of the Act as well as in the WTO processes.

416. With regard, to AGOA, the Commission organized the 2019 AGOA Midterm Review, which evaluated its utilization by the eligible Member States. The Review also prepared recommendations that were considered during the 2019 AGOA Forum that took place from 4 to 6 August 2019, at the same time the Commission signed a Joint Statement with the United States Government on the development of the AfCFTA. The USA expressed its intention to enter into a Free Trade Agreement with respective African countries, especially, in the wake of the expiry of AGOA in 2025. However, the Commission led the African side to inform the USA that such a move would jeopardize the establishment of the AfCFTA and it urged the African side to speak with one voice, engage with the USA as one block and to refrain from entering into FTAs with third parties until when the AfCFTA is well established.

417. Concerning the WTO processes, on 23 November 2019, the African Group Ambassadors and Experts had a retreat in Geneva, Switzerland, to take stock of the progress accomplished since the 11th WTO Ministerial Conference of 2017. This was particularly in the area of e-commerce following the decision by a group of countries to start discussions on rules at the WTO despite the lack of a ministerial mandate. The African Ambassadors also shared their reflections on the processes leading up to and at MC12. Special consideration was given to the replacement of the position of WTO Director General, which will become vacant on 31 August 2020. In this regard, the Commission recalled the Decision of the 12th Extraordinary Summit directing *"the African Ministers of Trade (AMOT) to work towards ensuring that Africa succeeds in getting the position and contributes to the strengthening of the multilateral trading system following the established AU relevant processes and procedures."*

418. The Commission also recalled the principle of speaking with one voice in international organisations and urged all Member States to rally behind the African candidate to be endorsed by the Summit in February 2020. Additionally, the Commission provided an update on the implementation of the AfCFTA Agreement, since its entry into force; and stressed the need to ensure that WTO agreements are well aligned to the AfCFTA and contribute to facilitate its process. The retreat came up with concrete recommendations on ensuring that there is coherence with the AfCFTA priorities and the African Group's negotiating agenda in the WTO, addressing key policy questions confronting the African Group in respect to current dynamics in the WTO and defining a way forward for the African Group on the remaining Doha negotiations issues.

419. On another aspect, the Commission took part at the 2nd High-Level UN Conference on South-South Cooperation (BAPA + 40), that took place in Buenos Aires, Argentina, from 22 to 23 March 2019. It stressed that the AfCFTA Agreement provides for a framework for further promoting South-South Cooperation placing Africa at the position to negotiate continent to continent agreements with other regions of the South such as the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR), the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), as well as the Caribbean regions.

M. SERVICE DELIVERY, PARTNERSHIPS AND OUTREACH

a. Enhance, Strengthen and Sustain Accountability across the Union

420. During the period under review, the Commission strived to strengthen its institutional capacity. In this respect, it took measures to improve, on a continuous basis, the performance and operational efficiency of the Commission structures in terms of finance, human resources and administration, legal, strategic planning, internal audit, conference, medical and protocol services, through benchmarking and inspiration of international best practices.

421. The Commission Medium Term Plan (MTP) 2018-2023 was implemented through close monitoring of administrative and financial issues, in light of ongoing institutional reforms and especially the Decision of the 11th Extraordinary Summit of November 2018.

422. The Commission continued to improve the budgeting process and financial management, identifying wastages and ensuring full compliance with the AU Financial Rules and Regulations (FRR).

423. The Commission also focused on Service Delivery and Capacity building priority areas in line with Agenda 2063 and its First Ten Year Implementation Plan such as:

- i) Strengthening of AU Budgetary process and pursuit of a financially sustainable and viable Union;

- ii) Strengthening and sustaining accountability through implementation of Audit recommendations within the Union;
- iii) Streaming the work of the Policy Organs and promote synergies with AU Organs, Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and other stakeholders.

424. In its efforts to build a well-governed institution, the Commission continued to reinforce the corporate governance frameworks and systems to enhance accountability in all spheres of management. It directed all departments and offices to emulate and observe result-based performance. In this regard, a number of Administrative Policies have been reviewed and new ones adopted and these include the following:

Administrative Policies

425. The Staff Regulations and Rules (SRR) were reviewed through extensive consultations with relevant stakeholders, in order to promote good governance across the board. They will be submitted for consideration by the Policy Organs in January/February 2020. The New Performance Management Policy and the Travel Policy were also reviewed and have been approved by the Chairperson. Moreover, the Code of Ethics and Conduct, and the Harassment Policy as well as policies on gifts, dress code, financial and asset declarations, conflict of interest management, and whistle-blower protection policies were drafted in order to strengthen institutional governance.

Talent Attraction, Recruitment and Selection

426. In line with Executive Council Decision EXT/EX.CL/Dec.1 (XX) of November 2018, to bring on board “*10 independent experts to review and improve the AU Recruitment and Selection System*”, the Commission constituted a committee which submitted an inception report, including an Action Plan in October 2019. This report will be considered by the Policy Organs in 2020.

Management Support Bodies

427. After the reconstitution of the management support bodies in 2017, most of them are now operational and continue to support the decision making processes of the Commission. Monitoring of the functionality of the Management bodies is ongoing as this provides timely information in order to check their performance with the aim of improving their contribution to the efficient and effective management of the Commission. In this regard, the APROB working methods have been developed and nine policies of the eleven procedures and manuals initially identified have been completed for consistency, fairness and transparency. The work of the Committee of Experts on Recruitment will build on the existing frameworks.

Centralization of Audit Recommendations and Responses

428. In order to promote transparency, accountability and confidence within the Union, the Commission conducted a comprehensive review of the Audit recommendations and responses. Based on this review, the Commission established the Internal Accountability Committee (IAC) that is composed of eleven (11) members.

The objective of the IAC is to enhance the Governance and Accountability through an effective follow up of the implementation of audit recommendations.

Verification and Valuation of the AU Worldwide Asset Portfolio

429. The Union-wide asset verification, tagging and valuation field work was successfully concluded by the end of 2018 and the report submitted in February 2019. An updated Union Wide Fixed assets register is now in place. The assessment recommended as follows:

- i) Need to change titles of those properties in the name of other organizations or Governments. Where necessary, value those properties and record in the financial records of AU;
- ii) Need to ensure annual physical verification of assets to confirm their existence;
- iii) Need to ensure all assets are tagged appropriately;
- iv) Need to implement the various recommendations on the AU asset Portfolio, including setting up an oversight governance body based on AU regional representation of Member States.

b. Strengthen AU Budgetary processes and pursue a financially sustainable and viable Union

Strengthen AU Budgetary Process

430. Building on the lessons from 2018, the Commission ensured that the 2020 budget was approved, timely, at the July 2019 Executive Council Session in Niamey, Niger. The Commission continued to enhance the financial viability and sustainability of the Commission by ensuring prudent, accountable and transparent use of the Union's financial resources and by effectively supporting efforts to help identify and develop viable alternative sources of finance to support the AU's programmes. The Commission also continued to follow up on the implementation of International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS) and the review of the AU Financial Rules and Regulations as indicated above, expected to be approved in January/February 2020. Eight (8) of the nine (9) Golden Rules establishing clear financial management and accountability principles that were approved by the Assembly in January 2018 were put to immediate implementation to reduce the variance between the budgets and expenditure.

431. The target of these efforts was that, by end of December 2019, the Commission would have reformed 75% of its budgeting, financial and accounting systems and processes. Among the key outputs expected for 2020, the following are to be achieved:

- i) Enhanced Results Based Budgeting (RBB) and effective financial reporting in the African Union;
- ii) Improved financial management and decision making mechanisms;
- iii) Oversight mechanism and processes enabled for improved accountability and better financial reporting;

- iv) Financial risks are effectively managed through the implementation of the Enterprise Risk Management (ERM);
- v) Member States pay their assessed contributions on a timely basis.

432. Implementation of the Golden Rules have had the following effects:

- a) Helped to reduce the variance between the budgets and expenditure outturn by applying a baseline on revenue and expenditure performances of past three years. This led to the 2020 budget decreased by 14% from 2018;
- b) Revenues and expenditures forecast were worked out based on past performance which helped to determine the AU's capacity to mobilize funds and spending on budget;
- c) Member States contribution and partner's receipts were computed in advance;
- d) Budget ceilings were introduced and fully applied to the 2019 and 2020 budgets;
- e) The gradual process to reduce the ratio of operational budget (including salaries) to the total budget towards the recommended 30% by 2021 from 48% and 40% in 2018 and 2019 respectively, is being implemented;
- f) The June 2015 Johannesburg Decision of funding 100% of operational budget, 75% of Program budget and 25% of Peace Support operation by 2021 is right on track. These targets may however be in jeopardy following a decision to limit Member States assessed contributions for 2021 to US\$250,000,000.00 down from US\$255,159,713.00 in 2020 (EX.CL/Dec.1069(XXXV));
- g) Mid-year review of budget has now been institutionalized, starting with the 2019 budget. This helped to determine the following:
 - i) Department's capacity to absorb the unspent budgets;
 - ii) Implementation plan highlighting how the unspent budgets will be absorbed by 31, December 2019 agreed within the Commission;
 - iii) Transfer of unspent budgets from one department to the other;
 - iv) Dropping of some budget line items that may not be implemented during the year;
 - v) Allocation of any savings to new budget items, if necessary.

433. The process to translate the Golden Rules into AU's policy and procedures as well as within the revision of the Financial Rules and Regulations is underway.

Reserve, Peace and Security Funds

434. In pursuit of financial prudence and accountability, the Commission followed up on sources of investment of the Peace Fund before its operationalization and re-enforcement of the Reserve and other Special Funds.

435. Against a target of US\$195 million (US\$65 million each for 2017, 2018 and 2019), Member States have as of 10 October 2019 contributed just over US\$131 million, representing 67% of the funds expected. This is in response to Assembly Decision Assembly/AU/Dec.605(XXVII) where it was decided that Member States contribute to the Peace Fund an amount of US\$325 million in 2017, gradually

increasing to US\$400 million by 2020. The deadline for endowing the Fund has now been extended by 24 months, through Executive Council's decision EX.CL/Dec.1061(XXXV)).

436. Investment of the Peace fund since May 2019 with ECO Bank in Nairobi, Kenya was effected with 2.85 % interest as follows:

- i) Investment of 34.4 Million of the peace fund on 27 May 2019 and earned interest of \$244,470 by end of 27 Aug 2019;
- ii) Investment of 66.9 Million of the Peace Fund on 31 Aug 2019 to earn interest of \$481,811 by end of Nov 2019.
- iii) Total interest earned for 6 months is USD 726,281.00.

Implementation of the 0.2% Import Levy

437. As of 11 October 2019, seventeen (17) countries¹ were collecting the 0.2% import levy, representing about 31% of AU membership. Collectively, their assessed contribution for 2019 make up 29% of the total assessed to Member States. All the 17 countries have remitted to AU either partially or in full for 2019 budget. Sixteen (16)² of the levy collecting countries have cleared all arrears they had prior to starting implementing the levy. Collectively, these countries are assessed US\$79,925,060.00 for regular budget and US\$18,551,000.00 as contribution to Peace Fund, representing 29%, respectively.

438. Only 17 countries out of the 55 Member States are collecting from the levy. Though funds are being collected, they are not remitted in full by some Member States. There is no enforcement mechanism to ensure that the money collected is actually transmitted. Some countries, such as Seychelles and Mauritius, have undertaken a zero tariff commitment at the WTO on almost 95% of their imports. Imposing the levy on the remaining goods would only yield less than what is required to pay to AU. Similarly, doing so would be in breach of GATT Article II on schedules of commitments.

439. Similarly, a number of Small Island States have raised concerns that their economies are small and not diversified, depending mainly on tourism. These countries have indicated that an increase in the tariffs on the small quantity of imports could potentially weaken their economies. Other Member States are constrained by legal implications under their obligations to the WTO, especially with the Most Favoured Nation (MFN) principle. The MFN principle requires that WTO members apply the same tariffs on a like product imported from other WTO members.

440. Some countries, such as the Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic, do not have a tangible productive industry or the export sector. Their imports mostly for humanitarian purposes are for sustaining the refugees.

Expenditure Monitoring and Reporting

¹ Kenya, Gambia, Congo Brazzaville, Gabon, Rwanda, Cameroun, Chad, Sierra Leone, Djibouti, Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea, Benin, Sudan, Ghana, Nigeria, Mali and Togo

² Only Sudan still has arrears probably due to the ongoing economic embargo that makes it difficult to remit funds to AU on time

441. The process of automating its account with the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia with a view to having real-time host to host linkage between the Bank and the Commission has started. Now, it is at testing stage. Automating bank reconciliation for Commission HQ Accounts has been completed. Thus far, the Bank reconciliations is up-to-date.

442. Plans are underway to make the Travel Policy more robust and avoid any room for misinterpretation. Among others, AU staff are not allowed to be on mission for more than 21 days in a quarter, and travel on business class is limited to certain category of personnel as per decisions of policy organs.

443. Migration from using cheques for payment transaction and now using bank transfers has been introduced. This has shortened the processing time by two days. Approval to rollout the use of visa cards for paying DSA and other payments to all staff was secured. The funds will be loaded unto respective cards internally at the Commission.

444. Cash and Liquidity Management module has been implemented in SAP to monitor cash balance in the various accounts.

Reformulated Scale of Assessment

445. The reformulated Scale of Assessment has been approved by the Assembly in February 2019. The new Scale has applied the following principles: Equitable burden sharing; Ability to pay; Solidarity; Avoidance of risk of concentration.

446. It has also introduced the “Caps and Minima’s” such that no Member State will pay less than US\$350,000 and no one paying more than US\$35 million in any given year.

Sanctions Regime

447. Contributions from Member States are often not remitted on time and/or not paid at all. Under the previous sanctions regime, Member States non-payment were classified to be in default only if they were in arrears for two full years. This resulted to a trend where about 33% of the assessed contributions were regularly held in arrears.

448. A new Sanctions regime was adopted in November 2018 by the Assembly through Decision Ext/Assembly/AU/Dec.3(XI). This new sanction’s regime seeks to, among others, shorten the period within which a Member State will be considered to be in default to six (6) months from two (2) years. It has also placed emphasis on compliance by introducing a phased application of sanctions should a Member State be in default. It also has provided relief to Member States who default due to circumstances that make them temporarily unable to pay their assessed contributions.

c. Streamlining the Work of Policy Organs and Promoting synergy

with other AU Organs, the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and other Stakeholders

Streamlining the Work of the Policy Organs

449. The Office of the Secretary General of the Commission ensured preparations and coverage of meetings of the policy organs, as well as retreats between the Permanent Representatives' Committee and other organs. 2019 was marked by the beginning of the implementation of the Assembly decision instituting a single ordinary session of the Assembly, the July session henceforth being devoted to the Coordination Meeting between the AU, RECs and Regional Mechanisms (RM), at the level of Heads of State and Government. Pursuant to its mandate, the Office of the Secretary General of the Commission ensured coverage of all the meetings held in 2019 by the different policy organs of the Union.

450. Within the context of greater appropriation of the decisions of the organs by the Groups of African Ambassadors in the main non-African capital cities, at the request of the Group of African Ambassadors in Washington DC, the Secretary General of the Commission held an interactive session with the said Group, during which he presented the decisions and outcomes of the Niamey meetings of July 2019. This practice should be generalised to give the actors concerned the same understanding of AU decisions.

451. With a view to harmonising AU working documents in compliance with the request of the Executive Council, the Office of the Secretary General of the Commission developed reporting formats for Specialized Technical Committees and PRC Sub-Committees.

452. Taking into consideration the need to strengthen coordination in order to improve the effectiveness of the Commission's activities, the digitalization of the meeting organisation process and inter-departmental coordination was introduced.

Coordination of UN Regional Mechanism (UN-RCM)

453. In order to strengthen the joint work between the Commission and UNECA, the Deputy Chairperson formed a Secretariat within the Commission that would focus on (RCM-Africa) and the seven priorities of the Commission: Regional Integration, Silencing the Gun by 2020, Climate Change, Gender, women and Youth, Capacity building, Clear Division of labour, and Theme of the year, which have been included in thematic clusters. This engagement has led so far to better clarity of roles and areas of support/assistance expected from development partners (UN) in the context of the ongoing institutional Reforms within the African Union and the United Nations System. The RCM-Africa Stakeholders meeting that took at the Commission in September 2019, emphasized the need for high level AU Leadership engagement within the current UN transitional arrangements for the Africa Region to ensure that the new systems being established effectively caters to the development priorities and vision of the AU. This led to the establishment of an AU Ad-Hoc RCM-Africa Secretariat to serve as the focal point for consultations and collaboration with the UN Economic Commission for Africa.

d. Audit Matters

454. The Office of Internal Audit (OIA) prepared its plan for the year 2019 using a risk assessment methodology of Audit Management System (MKInsight) and inputs from management. In addition, the OIA did set its audit priorities based on the results of the mapping exercise on domestication of the First Ten Year of Implementation Plan of Agenda 2063. The OIA's key priority areas include:

- i) Providing assurance services on the adequacy of AU's Governance, Risk Management and Controls, so that AU objectives are achieved;
- ii) Providing audit support services in ensuring that the institutional capacities of AU are improved, and relations with strategic and other partners are strengthened.

455. The OIA Annual Audit Plan for the year 2019 covered a total of 45 audit projects on both the Headquarters and Outstation offices (AU Organs, Field Missions, Regional, Representational and Specialized Offices). The annual plan includes various kinds of audits namely: financial, certification, compliance, operational (performance audits) as well as information technology (IT) audits. It also includes staff development activities in line with the Institute of Internal Auditors (IIA) standards. The OIA also undertook 12 projects that were not in the 2019 plan but were requests from management or investigation projects, included under the special requests was the audit verification of the salary arrears for the AU staff for the years 2015, 2016 and 2017. This exercise which extended into the second half of the year took a substantial amount of audit time. Majority of the OIA audit projects (outstations) are due to be conducted in the second half of the year.

456. Therefore, the impact of OIA audit activities during the period may be summarized as follows:

- i) OIA audit reports issued during the year assisted management at various levels to review the controls and ensure that strong internal controls are maintained;
- ii) OIA audit reports were also shared with the AU Board of External Auditors (BoEA). Reliance of OIA reports by the BoEA saves the amount of time and cost that could be incurred on audit of the financial statements of the Commission and other AU organs.

457. The OIA has been preparing its annual plan and conducting the audits based on its own risk assessment since there is no risk management function in place. The Commission is still working on the framework for risk management. In reiteration, it is recommended that the Commission should expedite the setting up of a unit to oversee implementation of a risk management system in the organization in due course.

458. However, the OIA structure has a large proportion of staff who are under Partner Funds leading to high staff-turnover since their contracts are on short term basis. It is hoped that the ongoing restructuring exercise should address these and other structural challenges.

Institutional Audit

459. The Commission underwent the institution assessment for qualification for EU funding by the European Union where 7 pillars were audited including internal control, Accounting, External Audit, Grants, and Procurement. The audit concluded that the Commission had become IPSAS compliant.

460. Audit issues are being addressed and being tracked for progress on status of implementation. The major ones were:

- i) Follow-up was done and most are cleared during 2019. The balance amount of outstanding imprest will be deducted from arrear salaries in October 2019 and the rest from salaries starting from November 2019 payroll due to the high amount involved per person;
- ii) Interoffice balances: most of the old accounts are reconciled and it will be reduced further by end of year.

461. Assets: An internal Task Force has been established to address all issues raised by auditors. Physical inventory is to be undertaken before end of year to be updated in the accounting records. Various adjustments were done in SAP to reconcile issues raised.

e. STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

Evaluation of Strategic Partnerships

462. In Addis Ababa, in January 2017, the Executive Council issued Decision EX.CL/Dec.942(XXX), which took note of the report of the PRC on the Evaluation of the Strategic Partnerships, and requested the PRC with the Commission to hold further discussions on all aspects of strategic partnership, in order to formulate appropriate proposals and recommendations. Following deliberations by the Sub-Committee of the Whole on Multilateral Cooperation and the PRC and in close collaboration with the Commission, the Report of the Evaluation of the AU strategic partnerships, was re-submitted to the Executive Council during its Thirty-Fourth and Thirty-Fifth Ordinary Sessions held respectively held from 7 to 8 February 2019 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia and 4-5 July 2019 in Niamey, Niger. In both meetings, the report was returned to the subcommittee on Multilateral Cooperation for further deliberations. The Subcommittee of the Whole on Multilateral Cooperation is organizing a retreat from 13 to 16 December 2019 in order to conclude deliberations on the evaluation of strategic partnerships.

463. The Executive Council noted the absence of consensus regarding the format of participation in Partnerships' Meetings and, in referring the item back to the Sub-Committee on Multilateral Cooperation for further review, requested that the Ambassadors deliberate to achieve consensus on the matter, particularly in light of the challenges that the Union has been facing in implementing existing participation decisions. Attaining consensus among Member States around the evaluation findings will enable the Union to move forward in an organized manner on its priority to strengthen Africa's global voice and representation.

Strategic Partnerships

464. The Commission has continued to implement policy organ decisions pertaining to strategic partnerships, particularly in the context of Africa-Arab, FOCAC, TICAD, AU-EU, Africa-Turkey, Africa-India partnerships, as follows:

- **Africa-Arab**

465. In line with the Malabo 2016 Africa-Arab Summit Declaration and Resolutions, the Commission has pursued a close and continued engagement with the Arab side through the following high level meetings: The 8th General Cooperation Meeting between the African Union Commission and the General Secretariat of the League of Arab States; the 13th and 14th Meetings of the Senior Officials of the African Union – Arab Partnership Coordination Committee held on 2 May 2019 at the League of Arab States Headquarters in Cairo, Egypt and on 11 September 2019 at the AU Head Quarters and the 7th Ministerial Meeting of the Coordination Committee of the Africa-Arab Partnership held at the Headquarters of the United Nations in New York on 23 September 2019. During all these engagements, the Commission did not spare any effort to stress on the importance for a timely preparation for the 5th Africa-Arab Summit to be held in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia (KSA). However, the African side has been informed of the postponement of the 5th Africa-Arab Summit initially scheduled to be held in Riyadh. The Commission stands ready to work with the LAS to prepare for 5th Africa-Arab Summit postponed to 2020 by Saudi Arabia.

- **FOCAC**

466. In line with the outcomes of the Beijing 2018 FOCAC Summit, the Commission engaged with the Chinese side and signed in May 2019 a “*Cooperation Plan on Jointly Promoting the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road between the Government of the People’s Republic of China and the Commission*”. The aim of the Cooperation plan is to ensure the establishment of an appropriate implementation mechanism through which China will scale up its cooperation in supporting the programs of the Union, notably the support to the Africa Center for disease Control and Prevention (Africa ACDC) in addition to the construction of the Headquarters of the Africa CDC, the development of training programs, the setting-up of a China-AU Joint Working Group of trans-national and trans-regional Infrastructure Cooperation in Africa to support the implementation of the Program for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA) as well to support other programs on Agriculture Development and promoting cooperation on innovation and entrepreneurship between Chinese and African young people, and facilitating technology transfer to Africa.

- **TICAD**

467. The 2019 TICAD Summit (TICAD 7) marked 26 years since the first TICAD Summit held in Tokyo, in 1993. TICAD 7 Summit and its Preparatory Meetings were hosted by the Government of Japan, in Yokohama, Japan, on 26 - 30 December 2019, under the theme: “*Advancing Africa’s Development through People, Technology and Innovation*” and witnessed, for the first time, the participation of all AU Member States. The Summit provided the opportunity for the African Union and Japan to re-design the future of a win-win relation with a view to accelerating Africa’s development as encapsulated in Agenda 2063, and to reaffirm the importance of human resources, agriculture, infrastructure and industrialization for Africa’s transformation. The Summit

also re-emphasized the critical role of the Private Sector through a dedicated dialogue with policy-makers.

468. The Summit concluded with the adoption of the Yokohama Declaration and the Action Plan, 2019.

- ***African Union (AU) –European Union (EU)***

469. The Commission co-organized, in close collaboration with the European Commission, the First AU-EU Ministerial Follow Up Meeting which was held in Brussels, Belgium on 21-22 January 2019, to advance the process of implementing the outcomes of the 2017 Abidjan Summit, The Joint Communiqué of the 1st AU-EU Ministerial considered progress on the Abidjan outcomes and charted the way forward towards the 6th EU-AU Summit to be held in 2020 in Europe. The second ministerial meeting will be held in Kigali. In parallel, the Commission engaged with the EU on the finalization of the 5th AU-EU Summit Action Plan, which has also seen significant levels of implementation based on the commitments made in Abidjan.

470. The EU elections have yielded an administration that is supportive of Africa-EU relations, as expressed by the incoming President of the European Council, and the President of the European Commission. The latter visited the AU Commission on 7 December 2019 as her first visit out of Brussels. She met with the Chairperson of the Commission and pledged continued support to the AU-EU partnership.

471. In parallel, the Commission has been requested to provide technical assistance to the African Group in charge of negotiating the Africa pillar under the post-Cotonou agreement between the ACP and the European Union. This is with the view to ensuring that Africa speaks with one voice in the different platform of its partnership with the EU, in fulfilment of Decision *Assembly/AU/Dec.715(XXXII)* taken in Addis Ababa in February 2019. To support the negotiating team, the Commission financed and deployed four experts in the fields of (i) Capacity building and institutions; (ii) Youth, Diaspora, Mobility and Migration; (iii) Governance, Peace and Security; and (iv) Trade, investment, industrialization and services.

- ***Africa-Turkey***

472. In line with the Communiqué of the Second Ministerial Review Conference of the Africa-Turkey partnership, held on 12 February 2018, in Istanbul, Turkey, in which, both sides committed to streamline efforts for the successful organization of the Third Africa-Turkey Summit to be held in 2020 in Turkey, a delegation from the Commission travelled to Ankara on 21 May 2019 for a meeting with the Turkish side to commence discussions on preparation for the upcoming Summit. A proposal has been made by Turkey that the Summit be held in the early second quarter of 2020.

- ***Africa-India Partnership***

473. In preparation for the upcoming Fourth Africa-India Summit to be held in 2020, the Commission participated in the mid-term Review Meeting of the Africa-India Partnership held from 11 to 12 September 2019, in New Delhi. The African side was

represented by the PRC Steering Committee led by the Chairperson of the PRC Subcommittee of the Whole on Multilateral Cooperation. The Meeting evaluated the status of implementation of projects agreed upon during the 3rd India-Africa Forum Summit, which was held in 2015 and recognized the need for the Partnership to focus on the multilateral aspects of cooperation based on the Agenda 2063. Furthermore, the Meeting called for the early commencement of preparation for the 4th Africa-India Forum Summit, which is scheduled to take place in 2020.

Institutional Partnerships

474. In 2019, the Commission forged new institutional partnerships with the Governments of the United Kingdom, Russia, Norway as well as the World Bank and the Eurasian Economic Commission. The Commission continued to manage existing institutional partnerships such as with the United States of America, Germany and France. According to findings of the evaluation of strategic partnerships, institutional partnerships are meant to strengthen the ability of the Commission and other AU organs to deliver on the goals of Agenda 2063 by benefiting from the comparative advantage of each partner.

475. **Norway:** The Commission and Norway worked together to operationalize a strategic agreement signed in December 2018 for cooperation in the areas of peace, security and promotion of good governance. In October 2018, Norway established a dedicated Norwegian delegation to the African Union in Addis Ababa. A high level dialogue between Norway and the Commission is foreseen in 2020.

476. **France:** Following the signature of a cooperation MOU between the Foreign Minister of France and the Chairperson of the Commission in June 2018, President Emmanuel Macron visited the African Union on 13 March 2019, where it was agreed to launch implementation of the MOU and announced the holding of the first session of the high level dialogue, which was subsequently held with the Foreign Minister of France in June 2019. The two sides applauded the historic entry in force of the AfCFTA and France pledged to support it. Both agreed on the importance of continuing to look for long-term predictable financing of peacekeeping operations under AU and UN Security Council mandates. They stressed the importance of continuing to coordinate their efforts on the multilateral issues of disarmament and non-proliferation, the protection of human rights and criminal justice. France expressed support to the role of the AU and African institutions in peace and security on the Continent, and highlighted their role in maintaining multilateralism. It was judged necessary to step up efforts to raise national contributions as part of the implementation of the Paris Climate Agreement and to boost efforts to develop renewables.

477. The strategic dialogue was followed by the Chairperson of the Commission ' through his participation at the G7 Leaders' Summit in Biarritz in August 2019, to which issues of climate change were central, along with gender and promotion of equal opportunity. France also pledged that the next France-Africa Summit in 2020 would be dedicated to supporting AU efforts on promotion of sustainable cities.

478. **United Kingdom:** On 22 February 2019, a Memorandum of Understanding with the United Kingdom's Minister for Africa, where the two sides agreed to work

together in a number of concrete areas, namely (i) tackling the common challenges of climate change; (ii) enhancing trade and investment links and investing in people particularly to capitalize on Africa's demographic dividend; (iii) strengthening resilience through continued support to the African Union's peace-making and peacekeeping role. On migration and human mobility, the two sides recognized the added value of the UN Global Compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration and agreed to work together to support initiatives that are aimed at preventing irregular migration and opening up legal pathways. The two sides agreed to work together to promote and protect an equitable and inclusive rules-based international system with the UN at its core. The UK recognized and supported the AU's desire to find African solutions for African problems and the importance of the use of UN-assessed contributions for AU-led Peace Support Operations authorized by the UN Security Council. The two sides agreed to meet on an annual basis to assess progress with the partnership and to discuss common priorities and challenges. The first High Level Dialogue is scheduled to take place in 2020.

479. **Germany:** on 9 and 10 May 2019, the Commission with AUDA/NEPAD engaged in a strategic dialogue with the German Foreign Office and the Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development, where cooperation priorities for the next two years were discussed against the backdrop of developments on the Continent and in the world. The two sides agreed to cooperate in the areas of youth and skills development; the African Governance Architecture, the operationalization of the AU Innovation Lab jointly between the Commission and AUDA/NEPAD; the AfCFTA; the implementation of the African Agenda on Land through the program Strengthening capacities for Land Governance; and the establishment of a joint financing mechanism to support the work of the Commission. Germany pledged up to 60 million euros for two years to support AU programmes in those areas.

480. **Russia and the Eurasian Economic Union:** On the margins of the Russia-Africa Summit in Sochi in October 2019, a memorandum of understanding was signed between the Chairperson of the Commission and the Russian Foreign Minister. The MOU outlined areas of institutional cooperation, focused on promotion of economic and political ties, multilateralism, science, technology and education, peace and security, among other common priorities. At the same time, the Chairperson of the Commission signed an MOU with the Chairman of the Board of the Eurasian Economic Commission, aimed at promoting exchange of experience, mutual learning between the two organizations and dialogue around issues of common concern.

481. **United States:** In line with the MoU between the Commission and the US Department of State, signed in 2013, the Seventh High Level Dialogue (HLD) between the Commission and the United States Government was held on 14-15 November 2019, in Washington, DC. The Dialogue opened up cooperation channels and bridged gaps in views on peace, security and governance as well as trade and investment. The two partners recognized Silencing the Guns as the AU theme of 2020, and pledged to work together on empowering women, counterterrorism, counter-trafficking and addressing transnational crime. The two sides also recognized the entry into force of the AfCFTA as a game-changer in Africa, and welcomed recent U.S. initiatives to promote trade and investment in Africa through the Prosper Act and the establishment of the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation. They agreed on the importance of mobilizing investments in projects that promote regional integration in

Africa. The Commission is expected to host the 8th High Level Dialogue, in Addis Ababa, in the last quarter of 2020.

N. AU REGIONAL OFFICES AND REPRESENTATIONAL MISSIONS

AU Permanent Mission in Brussels

482. During the period under review, the Permanent Mission in Brussels executed the tasks contained in its activity program for the year 2019. These activities are mainly focused on the following: (1) monitoring the implementation of the AU-EU partnership; (2) follow up on the ACP-EU Post-Cotonou 2020 Negotiations (Africa Regional Protocol); (3) Promoting continental integration Agenda; as well as (4) networking with the African Diaspora and Civil society organizations in Europe.

483. The Brussels Office represented the Commission, in close collaboration with the European Commission, to facilitate the organization and participated in the 1st AU-EU ministerial meeting that took place in Brussels, Belgium, from 21 to 22 January 2019. To ensure that the recommendations of this meeting are effectively implemented, a coordination/consultation mechanism with the Group of African Ambassadors in Brussels has been establish, with the particular focus on migration issues.

484. The Brussels Office also continued to monitor the negotiations of the ACP-EU Post-Cotonou 2020 Negotiations, in particular the Africa Regional Protocol by participating, as observer, in all the Group of Africa Caribbean Pacific (ACP) and ACP-EU meetings relating to this process. It is also worth mentioning that the Commission has launched the process of recruitment of consultants to provide technical support to the Central Negotiating Group (CNG) for the Regional Protocol Africa as per the request of the ACP Chief Negotiator and in line of the AU Decisions (November 2018, January-February 2019) related to the Post-Cotonou 2020 negotiations. To date, four independent consultants have been selected and will be deployed in due course to provide technical assistance to the Africa – CNG.

485. During the period under review, the Brussels Office organized a sensitization workshop on the AfCFTA on 12 June 2019 in Brussels. The workshop enabled members of the Group of African Ambassadors in Brussels, the representatives of the African Diaspora in Europe, as well as some of development partners of Africa based in Belgium to be appraised on the AfCFTA Agreement, its opportunities and challenges. At the end of this workshop, a number of recommendations were proposed to enable the AU anticipate on potential difficulties related to the implementation of this Agreement, including, inter alia, the need to finalize the negotiations on tariff concessions taking into account the situation of vulnerable economies and least developed countries (LDCs), the adoption of simple and transparent rules of origin, the involvement of the African Diaspora, among other recommendations.

486. The Brussels Office organized a workshop with African diaspora and civil society in Europe on AU Theme of the Year: “Refugees, *Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons: Towards Durable Solutions to Forced Displacement in Africa*”.

The workshop was aimed at utilizing the unique position of the diaspora and civil society on the Commission's activities on the theme of the year and to discuss the opportunities of involving them in strategic advocacy to address humanitarian challenges sustainably as enshrined in Agenda 2063.

AU Permanent Mission to China

487. It will be recalled that the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) Johannesburg Summit Action Plan adopted in December 2015, indicated that "China invites the African Union to establish a representative office in Beijing at an early date." The Commission has, since November 2018, operationalized the AU Permanent Mission to China and a Permanent Representative was appointed. Subsequently, the Mission to China was launched on the sidelines of the FOCAC Beijing Summit held in September 2018. The primary mandate of the AU Permanent Mission in China is to represent the AU in Beijing and to spearhead efforts to strengthen and consolidate the AU-China relations in various fields of cooperation over the next three years, including cooperation on political, peace and security; infrastructure development in Africa; implementation of Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) in Africa, capitalizing on synergies between the BRI and AU Agenda 2063 in relevant sectors as well as other relevant ongoing programmes of mutual interest between the AU and China.

488. While the Permanent Mission in China is still in an early stage of its operationalization, it has been very successful in several areas of its endeavours, guided by its mandate in the country, notably, the following:

- i) It promoted the implementation of cooperation programmes between China and Africa, with particular focus on promotion and capitalization of synergies between FOCAC-the BRI and AU Agenda 2063 in relevant sectors;;
- ii) It facilitated contacts and exchange of cooperation programmes and projects between different China institutions/entities and AU specialized agencies, institutions, departments and delegations;
- iii) It provided regular updates to the Government of China, private sector, international partners on AU's work in the continent through the dissemination of AU decisions, programmes and activities in various meetings. The activities undertaken have equally promoted AU's presence and enhanced its visibility in the country, through site and field visits to various public and private Chinese institutions and events and diplomatic missions in the country as well as visiting delegations of the AU and Member States;
- iv) It coordinated with the African Group various efforts on the implementation of FOCAC outcomes and the AU Agenda 2063.

489. The Permanent Mission was made operational with the support of the government of China through a grant of USD 1 million. The funds were used as foundation for the establishment of the Beijing Office. The Mission, being a new Office, is operating under quite difficult and demanding conditions on the ground with two professionals – Political and Peace and Security and Finance and Administration Officers, with four local staffs. The grant of China enabled to cover operational expenses, notably the Office rental, construction of conference facilities and other

office requirements.

490. Despite the progress, a number of challenges need to be addressed in the future especially by providing the Mission with an approved structure and to recruit to the positions thus created as a priority. The urgent need to engage the Chinese side to clear the Host Agreement for its early finalization and signature.

AU Permanent Delegation in Geneva

491. During the year under review, the Permanent Delegation in Geneva pursued its effort to support the African Group in Geneva and coordinate AU involvement in the WTO and other fora. In 2019, the Geneva Office focused on three priority areas, namely: human rights and humanitarian issues; trade matters; and African candidature and leadership in international systems.

492. In March 2019, the Commission attended the High Level Segment of the Human Rights represented by Chairperson, Moussa Faki Mahamat, who emphasized the need for Africans to be able to address all the challenges of Human Rights themselves. This is taking into consideration that Africa has its own credible mechanisms to deal with them.

493. In the same vein, the issue of migration has been addressed. In line with the 2019 Theme “*Year of Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons: Towards Durable Solutions for Forced Displacement in Africa*”, the Geneva Office undertook various activities to popularize that Theme and collect a wide-range of contributions from all concerned stakeholders.

494. During 2019, the Geneva Office continued to tackle the issue of AU having no status at the World Trade Organization (WTO), issue which is still pending since the 1990s. Currently, the situation is more compelling for the AU to have such a status due to its importance in facilitating full operationalization of AfCFTA that is to promote inter-African trade. The Geneva Office is continually engaging the African Group of Ambassadors in Geneva to use the opportunity of the WTO's Twelfth Ministerial Conference to be held in 2020 and all other upcoming venues to push for the attainment of the status. After all, the Doha Development Agenda considers that rules on new issues to govern international trade are premature.

495. Equally, the 15th Quadrennial Conference of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD XV) will take place in October 2020. UNCTAD XV should highlight the need for international cooperation to be heightened rather than decreased; and for UNCTAD to continue its mandate to provide developing countries and other Member States with policy-relevant research, analysis, recommendations and other activities regarding trade and development and the interlinkages that these have to broader systemic issues such as finance, debt, investment, and taxation. The outcome document should reiterate the commitment of the Member States to strengthen UNCTAD as the focal point within the United Nations system for the integrated treatment of trade and development and interrelated issues in the areas of finance, technology, investment and sustainable development.

496. Given the importance of African leadership in the UN and international system

in ensuring that the reality of the continental context and specificities are well articulated and addressed, the Geneva Office sustained its efforts to implement relevant policy organs decisions on the matter. In the September 2019 elections for members of the Committee against Torture, it was noted that Africa had endorsed only one candidate, while the continent could have increased its chances by having more candidates. In this regard, it is important for Member States to continue speaking with one voice at international fora with the support of the Commission.

497. As Africa prepares for the upcoming elections of the Deputy Director General (DDG) of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and Director General of ILO to be conducted in 2020 and 2021, respectively, the Geneva Office will continue to advocate AU's endorsed candidates. The solidarity shown by Member States during the election of Director General of the WHO was exemplary and should be emulated during the upcoming elections.

AU Observer Mission to the United Nations

498. In keeping to its mandate of developing and maintaining constructive and productive institutional relationships between the African Union and the United Nations institutions as well as to promote a common African view/position within the African Group in Multilateral negotiations, the Mission continued to provide strategic guidance and direction to the Commission for enhancing strategic partnership with the United Nations. The Mission ensured the effective monitoring and implementation of AU Decisions within the UN system as well as building on the key pillars of the Au Strategic Plan in these interactions, both at UNGA, UNSC and other relevant Organs in all areas of AU stake and interests.

499. The Mission continued to coordinate and support the activities of the African Group, through the convening of weekly meetings of the Group (at least 2 meetings per week), advising on strategies for a more effective presence and impact of the African Group within the UN system. The Office also facilitated the planning and organization of the Annual Retreat of African Permanent Representatives which included over 80 participants including senior officials of the United Nations.

500. The Mission also provided technical support to the African Group Candidatures Committee and facilitated the participation of the Chairs of the African Group and the Candidatures Committee at the AU Summit held in Niamey, Niger in accordance with the Executive Council Decision.

501. On the issue of Security Council reform, the Mission continued to closely monitor the ongoing intergovernmental negotiations in the General Assembly on various clusters of UN Security Council Reform, in accordance with resolution 62/557 of 15 September 2008. Pursuant to all AU Assembly decisions on United Nation reform, the Mission continued to coordinate the activities of the AU Permanent Representatives of the Committee of Ten (C-10) in New York on UN Reform, working in consultation with the African Group, through the articulation of the Ezulwini Consensus and Sirte Declaration.

502. In the area of Peace and Security, the Mission continued to leverage the Joint AU-UN Framework for Enhanced Strategic Partnership in the area of Peace and

Security to optimize the impact of AU decisions within the UN Security Council and maintained constant consultations with African Members of the UN Security Council (A3) on African issues as well as regular participation in the work of the UNSC by maintaining regular participation in UNSC sessions on these matters. The A3 played a significant role in the adoption of UNSC Resolution 2457 on the AU's Silencing the Guns initiative. While the AU's leadership role was upheld by the UNSC on the issue of Sudan, it continues to deny the AU a role over the Libyan crisis as was evidenced during the 13th annual consultations held between the AUPSC and the UNSC, in Addis-Ababa, Ethiopia on 21-22 October 2019. With regard to the issue of financing of AU-led Peace Support Operations (AUPSOs), building on previous resolutions adopted by the UNSC, in particular 2320 (2016) and 2378 (2017), the A3 has been proactive in keeping this issue on the agenda of the UNSC-AUPC. However, it is imperative that, the forthcoming Assembly of the Union in February 2020 provides clear guidance on this issue. The Mission plans to enhance its support to the A3, including support to Niger and Tunisia, the two incoming members, to better prepare their membership of the UNSC. To promote continuity between the new and outgoing African Members of the UNSC, the Mission will convene an experience sharing and best practices workshop in early January 2020.

503. With respect to AU's efforts to implement its PCRD Policy within the context of Agenda 2063, the Mission scaled up its engagements with the African Coordination Mechanism of the Peace Building Commission (PBC). The Mission organized a retreat for the African Coordination Mechanism of the PBC, the African Member States in the UN Security Council (A3), the Women, Peace and Security focal points on PBC to deliberate on how the African Member States would prepare for and contribute to the 2020 Review of the Peacebuilding Architecture. The retreat, as well as a subsequent lesson learned meeting with African countries that have benefited from PBC support, agreed on the need to articulate an "African Position Paper" on the 2020 Review of the UN Peacebuilding Architecture. The "Position Paper," which will be submitted to the AU-PSC for endorsement, would guide Africa's engagement during the intergovernmental process.

504. On Economic and Social matters, the Mission continued to proactively engage with key stakeholders, particularly the Africa Group and development partners to promote, at all levels, a proper appreciation of Agenda 2063 vis-à-vis the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals. Efforts were increased to mobilize support for the implementation of Agenda 2063 as well as advocating the important role of Official Development Assistance (ODA) in the attainment of its goals and the SDGs. In 2019, the Mission championed a number of strategic collaborations in enhancing socio-economic developments on the continent, through: i) The African Dialogue Series (ADS) 2019; ii) A high-Level Event on Illicit Financial Flows (IFFs); and; iii) The Africa Day, which served as a platform for African countries to present their Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs).

505. Following the launch of the 100,000 SME's for 1 Million Jobs by 2021 Campaign It was recognized that SME finance is pivotal to the success of the Agency's approach, by building the business skills set of young SME's to enhance their formal business approaches in order to increase their access to finance.

506. On Social Development, the Mission supported the annual meeting of the

Commission for Social Development which took place in February 2019 under the Chairmanship of Senegal. The meeting deliberated on the priority theme for the year “Addressing inequalities and challenges to social inclusion through fiscal, wage and social protection policies”. Among other things, it encourages Governments to combat discrimination and social exclusion; promote affordable and equitable access to basic services; use sound public spending policies to ensure universal health care; ensure active labour policies to provide decent work for all and a fair share of productivity for workers; and expand social protection to all people, despite limited fiscal resources.

507. The Mission monitored the 63rd session of the Commission on the Status of Women that was held in March 2019 under the theme “Social protection systems, access to public services and sustainable infrastructure for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.” The session urged Governments, the United Nations system, international and regional organizations, to strengthen normative, legal and policy frameworks so that women and girls can fully and equally enjoy their human rights and fundamental freedoms.

508. On communication, the Mission has been working on creating and enhancing the visibility of the AU within the United Nations. This objective has been achieved digitally through social media. However, there is a need to move from digital communications to outreach. Therefore, the Communications Team will continue to enhance the visibility of the Mission through increased partnerships, media relations and other initiatives that will contribute to spread the message of the African Union. In a bid to enhance the Office’s reach, in partnership with UN Global Communications, the Mission will produce the first edition of its Yearbook for January 2020. This publication will provide a summary of the key activities of the Mission with the aim of highlighting the leadership of the African Union in its various fields of activity, while welcoming the enhanced AU-UN partnership.

509. The activities of the African Group continue to be accorded high priority with a view to enhancing Africa’s influence and impact at the United Nations. These efforts have resulted in a more cohesive and unified African approach in dealing with global issues and speaking with one voice around a Common African Position. As a result, Africa’s leadership was at the helm of the 74th Session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) bodes well for the continent in terms of its leadership in promoting and advancing Africa’s interests and priorities at the United Nations. The close alignment of the priorities of the President of the General Assembly with those of Africa, most notably in Education, Gender Equality and Women Empowerment, Sustaining Peace, Financing for Development and Partnership is encouraging. The Mission will continue to support the African Group to leverage its collective political weight to shape the African narratives as well as promote and defend Africa’s interest. In this vein, there is a strong imperative for a renewed commitment to the ideals and principles of the United Nations Charter, reaffirmation of the true value of multilateralism and the centrality of the United Nations in addressing global challenges. The commemoration of the 75th Anniversary of the United Nations offers a unique opportunity to do so. Needless to say, in the changing global context where multilateralism continues to be under threat, the role of partnerships has gained prominence. In this respect, the fact that the African Group is entering into strategic partnerships with both the Nordic Countries and CARICOM is a welcome development.

510. The partnership between the African Union and the United Nations has made significant progress with remarkable progress between the AU-PSC and UNSC, the Commission and the Secretariat as well as in the field. The two institutions are increasingly leveraging their comparative strengths to complement each other. The African Group has demonstrated strong commitment in ensuring close alignment of Africa's Agenda 2063 with the 2030 Global Agenda. Translating these aspirations into tangible results on the ground, at regional and national levels remains a serious challenge which can only be overcome through better coherence and coordination.

511. Among the challenges that the Office is confronted with, the following can be cited:

- i) Renovation of the old premises (354 e 50th street): The Office has submitted the requisite proposals from three companies bidding for the contract to renovate the premises. Meanwhile, the neighbours around the premises have been lodging complaints about the condition of the building and its adverse effects on the value of the properties in the areas. A decision of the relevant policy organs is awaited. The Commission is yet to take a decision on this longstanding issue;
- ii) Renovations of the conference room not yet completed due to some missing facilities, which make consultations with African Group and A3 members difficult;
- iii) The perennial issue of diplomatic status of the Mission, in spite of several attempts towards the US Government which are yet to produce results. The issue should be taken up within the AUC-USA institutional partnership;
- iv) The unresolved issue of the status of the Observer status of the AU Mission represents a huge impediment to its ability to effectively project global voice and representation. It poses obstacles to its effective participation in the deliberations of the UN as it does not have access to meetings of an important organ such as the G-77 and China. In the same vein, because of its observer status, speaking slots accorded to it are generally not favourable.

AU Representational Mission to the United States – Washington D.C. Office

512. Promoting and reinforcing the bilateral relations between the African Union and the United States of America has been, in 2019, at the centre of the AU Representational Mission's engagement and advocacy efforts with the U.S Administration, both at the level houses of Congress and the think tank community. The Mission has played a key role in the promotion of Africa's interests and priorities, raising the profile and visibility of the AU in the U.S. and mobilizing the support of key stakeholders and the Diaspora for regional and continental initiatives in conformity with its core mandate.

513. The year 2019 witnessed a particular strengthening of the AU's relations with the U.S in the areas of women economic empowerment, as well as the support for development of the AfCFTA. The signature by the Deputy Chairperson of the Commission, Kwesi Quartey and the Advisor to the U.S President Ms. Ivanka Trump, on 15 April 2019 of a joint communique committing to a partnership to advance women's economic empowerment and entrepreneurship across the continent is an

important milestone in the bilateral relationship. Similarly, the signing of a joint statement by the Commissioner for Trade and Industry and Ambassador C. J Mahoney, Deputy US Trade Representative concerning the development of the AfCFTA on 5 August 2019 reflected the shared goals to deepen cooperation on trade and investment.

514. The Mission used various diplomatic opportunities to engage a strategic dialogue with the U.S stakeholders on how the new initiatives launched by the current U.S Administration such as the US Development Finance Corporation and Prosper Africa can integrate the continental and regional dimensions in their development paradigm by providing support for Africa's transformative vision under Agenda 2063.

515. The Mission facilitated and supported the Commission's Delegation at the 7th Edition of the High-Level Dialogue of the African Union Commission- the United States of America took place in Washington, DC held on 15 November 2019.

516. Building on the strong bipartisan and bicameral support within both Houses of the U.S Congress that Africa enjoys, the AU Representational Mission spared no effort in 2019 to raise to mobilize support for AU's strategic priorities. A particular emphasis was put on the implementation of the AfCFTA), as well as the financing of the AU peace support operations. In this regard, a high level visit comprised of the three African Members of the United Nations Security Council (A3) at the level of Ambassadors (South Africa, Equatorial Guinea and Cote d'Ivoire) was organized from July 15 to 17 2019 by the AU Washington Office in coordination with AU Permanent Observer Mission to the United Nations. The objective of the visit was to secure the support of various US stakeholders, in particular the legislative branch of the US government, with regard to the A3 proposed Security Council resolution pertaining to the financing of African Union-led Peace Support Operations.

517. The high-level meeting with the chairmen of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Relations and Appropriations committees in the House of Representatives and the Senate reflected the importance of the relationship and the capital of sympathy that members of Congress, including the members of the Congressional Black Caucus have towards Africa and the African Union

518. It is worth mentioning that the Mission, which coordinates the monthly meetings of the African Diplomatic Corps, serves as the Secretariat of the Group and hosts the Group meetings as well as of its Committees in charge of U.S. - Africa Strategic Relations, Economic Development, Human and Sustainable Development and Public Affairs.

519. Working with the AU Commission's Department of Trade and Industry and the African AGOA Eligible Countries, the Office organized the AGOA Mid-Term Review in Washington, DC, from 12 to 13 June 2019 as key milestone in the preparation of the AGOA Forum that took place in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire from 4 to 6 August 2019 under the theme of "*AGOA and the future: Developing a New Trade Paradigm to Guide U.S-Africa Trade and Investment*".

520. In line of the Assembly's decision of February 2019 in Addis Ababa, pertaining to the recognition of the 400th Anniversary of the Transatlantic Slave Trade, the

Mission has played a leadership role in mobilizing the key stakeholders in the US, particularly the African Diplomatic Corps and Diaspora; and provided every assistance in order to ensure the effective implementation of this decision.

521. In this regard, the R 400 Summit was organized in Charlotte, North Carolina from 27 to 29 September, 2019, under the leadership of the founder of the R 400 Movement Bishop Alexander to inaugurate a vision and a movement that Reconnects, Reconciles, Reclaims and Rebuilds a thriving Pan-African future for the next 400 years. As stipulated in that Summit Decision, the R400 Conference launched the concept of the Park International Trade Hub, which aims at connecting businesses and African and African-American business leaders in different sectors from Africa and the United States to deliver business partnership.

O. COMMUNICATION AND OUTREACH

522. During the period under review, the Commission continued its efforts to increase the visibility of the AU through communication activities in both mainstream media as well as online and digital platforms.

a. Building the AU Brand Identity

523. Following the development of the first ever Brand Identity Style and Communication Guide for the AU, which serves as the reference point for all communication and visibility material for the AU and its organs to ensure uniformity in expression of the AU brand and creating one strong, the Commission initiated work on updating its iconography on communication material and digital platforms as well as realigning the AU Organs with the AU corporate brand identity.

524. New brand identities and websites for AU institutions were undertaken to align with the AU corporate brand with the African Energy Commission (AFREC), African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACERWC) being completed and work ongoing to enhance the branding and visibility for the AUDA--NEPAD, PAP,, PAU and the AU Advisory Board on Corruption.

b. Enhanced Use of Technology and Digital/Social Media Communication

525. A new AU website was launched in April 2019, with an improved user interface and content. Combined with activities redirected from social media platforms the new AU website saw an increase in visitors with over three (3) million page views registered during this period. In 2019, the Commission reached out to more people on social media platforms as compared to 2018, increasing followers on both Twitter (+21%) and Facebook (+7%). AU activities and programmes were promoted on Facebook to popularise and educate African citizens on the mandates of the Union. The following activities were promoted: AU Theme of the Year 2019, AU Commemorative Days, Agenda 2063 Aspirations and Flagship Projects, 1 Million by 2021, AU Anthems (in Swahili, English, French, Arabic, Portuguese and Spanish), AU Summits and meetings garnering 54.8 million impressions

c. Popularisation of Agenda 2063

526. Following the production of four Documentaries profiling Agenda 2063 Flagship projects, namely: Silencing the Guns, AfCFTA, Commodities Strategy and Infrastructure and Energy focusing on PIDA and Grand Inga Dam, a number of promotional activities were undertaken as follows:

- i) Airing the films on various regional TV networks, through the MOU signed with Africa 24 TV Network, the only African owned news channel and broadcasting in over twenty-five (25) African countries as well as in Europe, Middle East and North America (through broadcast partners), to over 80 million viewers;
- ii) The films were also promoted on Video sharing platforms (YouTube) and Social media (Facebook and Twitter);
- iii) Advertorials were run in regional and continental publications (combined readership of 4.1million readers as well as inflight magazines for major African airlines reaching combined annual travellers of 18.5million).

527. The Commission also engaged with African Media on Agenda 2063 through the Annual meeting of the Pan-African Network of Agenda 2063 Journalists, which was held in Johannesburg, South Africa. The network brought together journalist from across the continent to discuss key issues affecting Africa's development agenda and how to promote Agenda 2063, the work of the AU and to give importance to Africa's voices in telling Africa's story and sharing ideas on how Africa's media can better build the narrative of the continent.

528. In line with the decision from the STC-CICT 2017 for the AU to recognise the contributions of journalists towards the achievement of Aspiration 6 of Agenda 2063 and institutionalise the Pan-African Media Awards on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, the Commission has made efforts to identify contributions of journalists who give attention to development issues towards the achievement of Agenda 2063 in the process of institutionalizing the Pan-African Media Awards on Promoting Agenda 2063. In this regard and during the annual African Women in Media (AWiM) Conference in July 2019, 5 journalists were awarded in the areas of:- African Continental Free Trade Area; Silencing the Guns by 2020; African Passport and Free Movement of People; Free Trade and Migration; Women and Free Trade to promote Agenda 2063.

d. AU Studio

529. During the period under review, the Commission completed the mapping, architectural design and layout of the new AU Studio, which will be installed in the New Conference Centre at AU Headquarters in 2020.

e. Africa Fact-book Project

530. The Africa Fact-book project is an initiative undertaken under Agenda 2063 Aspiration 5 which seeks to enhance the strong cultural identity, common heritage, values and ethics of Africa. Following the stakeholders fundraising conference which was held in Harare, Zimbabwe in March 2018 and attended by representatives from the Commission, Member States and International development partners; the following activities were undertaken:

- i) MOU between the Commission and Book of African Records was renewed in January 2019 for collaboration in coming up with the first edition of the African Fact-book;
- ii) Seed funding and office space has been secured from the Government of Zimbabwe to enable efforts for production of the first edition;
- iii) Between September and October 2019, 35 researchers from diverse African countries were brought on board to work on the first edition over 60 days non-stop in camp (International Convention for the Africa Fact-book Making Process);
- iv) A High Level Editorial Board is being incorporated in the process whose role shall be to review the publication before its presentation to policy organs of the African Union. This board will consist of 1 former Head of State, 7 internationally recognised scholars of African history and 5 editors of international news organisations in Africa.

f. 2019 AU Publications

531. AU Echo 2019 Edition - Centred on the 2019 Theme of the Year and key activities of the Union. A special insert of the OAU Convention and Kampala Convention included to promote awareness of the AU treaties governing Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs).

532. African Union Handbook 2019 - The AU handbook is published annually by the Commission, in partnership with the New Zealand Government and its internal and external stakeholders. 2500 copies were produced and distributed during the AU Summits and during various internal and external events and meetings and to visitors to the AU offices.

g. Media Engagement and Public Advocacy

533. During the period under review, the Commission increased its outreach activities to the African citizenry and beyond. Several media briefings were held with over:

- i) 340 press releases issued and disseminated (average 7 PRs per week);
- ii) 150 Interviews organized for the Commission's leadership with various media houses;
- iii) Over 70 Press Conferences organised.

534. The AU Media Centre continued its operation, serving more than 2,000 visiting journalists covering events at the AU Headquarters in Addis Ababa or via satellite media centre at AU Summits in Kigali and Nouakchott in March and June/July 2018, respectively.

535. Lastly, the Commission has stepped up guided tours of AU Headquarters. Over 1,720 visitors took advantage of guided tours. They included African and non-African students of all age groups, dignitaries, diplomats and other officials, as well as international media groups.

P. CONCLUSION AND THE WAY FORWARD FOR 2020

536. This Report on the Activities of the Union and its Organs highlights some of the significant achievements the Union made in 2019 and for which the continent can take a legitimate pride. These achievements are a tangible demonstration of the impact of the Union's transformative agenda and its contribution to improving the livelihoods for African citizens. Their reinforcement and the need for a better outreach to make them known to African citizens will continue to engage the attention of the Commission, other Organs and Specialized Agencies in 2020.

537. Many challenges still persist. Conflicts and violence remain a reality that affects the lives of large segments of the African population. The democratization process and the promotion of good governance are still fraught with difficulties. Poverty and misery are the daily lot of hundreds of millions of people even though the continent is endowed with wealth and talent. The voice of Africa on the international stage is still insufficiently taken into account, even though the continent represents more than a quarter of the membership of the United Nations.

538. With Agenda 2063, Africa through the Union has developed a roadmap that clearly articulates the path forward for its transformation. The year 2019 offers the opportunity to move faster to break the multiple chains that hinder the actualization of Africa's rich human and natural potential. From this point of view, nothing is more decisive than the deepening of continental unity. As the Chairperson of the Commission has pointed out many times, "*With unity we are everything. Without it, we are nothing*".