



10th African Union Commission – European Commission Meeting - Joint Communique

Addis Ababa, 29 February 2020

1. The 10th AUC-EC Commission-to-Commission (C2C) meeting was held at the African Union (AU) Headquarters in Addis Ababa on 27 February. The meeting was co-chaired by the Chairperson of the AU Commission, Moussa Faki Mahamat, the President of the European Commission (EC), Ursula von der Leyen, with the participation of 22 EU Commissioners and nine AU elected officials. This C2C meeting was critical as a building block of an enhanced partnership, backed by the appropriate framework and instrument, to be solidified by mutual commitments at the AU-EU ministerial meeting on 5 May 2020 and the EU-AU Summit later in the year.

2. The two Commissions took note of progress on the priorities set in the 2017 Abidjan Declaration and focused the discussion on the alignment of their positions on the following areas: (i) sustainable growth, trade, investment and digitalization; (ii) peace, security and governance; (iii) migration and mobility; and (iv) climate change and resilient infrastructure. In all priority areas, the two sides reiterated their commitment to support multilateralism as an effective modality in addressing global challenges.

On Sustainable Growth, Trade, Investment and Digitalization

3. The European Commission welcomed the entry into force of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), and the ongoing implementation of its first phase, and stressed the importance of the second phase of negotiations on competition policy, intellectual property, and the investment protocol which aims to enhance the investment policy climate and address risks facing businesses and investors. The two Commissions agreed on the need to prioritise regional infrastructure as an underpinning element of the AfCFTA.

4. They agreed to maximise synergies between European and African private sectors in view of the upcoming EU-Africa Business Forum, and to promote actions focused on the diversification of African economies by (i) developing the private sector and strengthening productive capacity in agriculture, manufacturing and services; and value-addition in national and regional value chains; (ii) supporting regional and trans-continental transport; and (iii) promoting digitalization.

5. The two Commissions agreed to improve domestic resource mobilisation in Africa through reforms, tax revenues, tax transparency, international asset recovery, as well as fighting illicit financial flows, money laundering and corruption. Furthermore, the two Commissions called upon the international community to complement Africa's efforts to track, stop and repatriate illicit financial flows.

6. The two Commissions agreed to intensify efforts to enhance youth skills development and better match skills with the demands of the labour market, particularly in sectors with the highest job creation potential, notably in infrastructure development, digital economy and climate-friendly/green economy, renewable energy, ICT, agri-business and small-scale manufacturing, cultural and creative industries.

7. The two Commissions reaffirmed the contribution of inclusive rural transformation to sustainable growth and job creation and agreed to intensify efforts for the implementation of the recommendations of 'An Africa-Europe Agenda for Rural Transformation: Report by the Task Force Rural Africa' endorsed by the third African Union– European Union Agricultural Ministerial Conference for rural transformation, sustainable agriculture and agro food sector in Africa.

8. In order to better connect the two continents and accelerate growth for the achievement of the SDGs and AU Agenda 2063, they agreed to promote cooperation to establish a Digital Partnership based on a shared vision on an open and secure digital economy, and which puts African and European citizens at the centre of the digital transformation. They agreed that Africa and Europe should harness the many opportunities offered by digitalisation to drive innovation and transformation in all sectors. Building on the work done by the EU-AU Digital Economy Task Force, they noted the importance of taking into consideration the AU's Digital Transformation Strategy by Africa (2020-2030) for the future cooperation.

9. In this regard, both continents agreed to enhance their partnership to (i) support digital

infrastructure; (ii) build a secured single digital market in Africa by the 2030; (iii) help improve favourable environment, policy and regulation, (iv) develop digital skills and applications; and (v) promote digital innovation and entrepreneurship.

10. Both Commissions expressed their commitment to strengthening of the multilateral trading system. The European Commission reiterated its support to an enhanced observer status for the African Union at the World Trade Organisation (WTO).

On Climate Change and Resilient Infrastructure

11. The two Commissions took cognizance of the challenges posed by climate change to the development of both Africa and Europe and the achievement of the goals of Agenda 2063 and Agenda 2030. They noted the adverse impacts on food production, health, infrastructure, water resources, migration, peace and security. The two parties reaffirmed their engagement on the implementation of their respective commitments under the Paris Agreement, based on the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, in the light of national circumstances, and stressed the importance of reviewing progress on the worldwide commitments on climate financing made in Copenhagen (2009) and the Paris Agreement, with a target of reaching USD 100 billion per year by 2020, to support developing countries in responding to climate change. The two Commissions further reaffirmed their commitment to the multilateral climate change negotiations aimed at finding global solutions to the phenomenon and to work together to achieve successful outcomes at the UNFCCC conference (COP26) in Glasgow in November 2020.

12. The two Commissions also underscored the need to work together in the development and implementation of programmes aimed at facilitating the implementation of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), enhancing capacity and development of clean technologies, improving access to climate finance and promoting investments in climate change related projects.

13. The African Union Commission took note of the New Green Deal presented by The European Commission as the new long-term growth strategy for Europe, which recognises the global challenges of climate change and environmental degradation both requiring a global response.

14. Recognizing that infrastructure is the backbone of socio-economic development and job creation, both commissions agreed to continue supporting infrastructure development through the Programme for Infrastructure in Africa (PIDA), including its phase II. They committed to use the recommendations from the AU- EU Task Forces on Digital Economy, Transport and Connectivity, and Sustainable Energy Investment as vehicles for collaboration. They agreed as well to develop an efficient African continental transport network capable of ensuring flows of goods and services as well as to connect to the European network. They agreed to jointly support the Single Air Transport Market. The partnership shall also support the promotion of gender inclusion in infrastructure value chains as well as the ongoing process to ratify the AU Road Safety Charter and UN road safety Conventions.

On peace, security and governance

15. The two Commissions assessed the implementation of the provisions of the 2018 AU-EU Memorandum of Understanding on Peace, Security and Governance, which was part of the Abidjan priorities. They agreed to deepen its use in a more strategic way allowing for an effective use of the combined AU and EU political, security, development and humanitarian instruments, associating the UN as relevant. The European Commission congratulated the AU on the achievements made under the 2019 theme on 'Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons: Towards Durable Solution to Forced Displacement in Africa'. The European Commission also noted with appreciation the declaration of 2020 as the year of "Silencing the Guns: Creating Conducive Conditions for Africa's Development." In view of promoting African solutions to African problems, both sides stressed the urgent need to adapt and upscale cooperation to better respond to the changing nature of common threats, notably the spread of terrorism and violent extremism, trafficking and transnational crime including cybercrime and for action-oriented measures to curb the persistent illicit flow and use of arms and weapons into the African Continent.

16. The two Commissions emphasised the need to strengthen cooperation in various areas presently implemented through the 2018 Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), including promotion of multilateralism, conflict prevention, crisis management and peace building, and health security. Furthermore, transitional justice, the rule of law, elections, human rights and gender equality were also highlighted as key areas of cooperation. They also stressed the critical role of cybersecurity and trust in the digital age and agreed to focus on and enhance capacity in privacy and data protection.

17. Recognizing the need to ensure sustainable financing as a priority for peace and security in both Africa and Europe, both sides recognised the strategic significance of the revitalised AU Peace Fund, and exchanged on EU plans to establish the European Peace Facility. While noting the importance of continued European support to African-led initiatives, both sides pledged to pursue working together

on the financing of African-led peace initiatives, including through UN-assessed contributions. In that context, the AU Commission welcomed the launching of the funding for the Fourth EU Support Programme to the implementation of the African Peace and Security Architecture (EU APSA IV).

18. The Commissions agreed to support the implementation of the continental framework on youth in peace and security, in support of Article 17 of the AU Youth Charter UNSCR 2250 including on participation, prevention, protection, partnership.

On Migration, Mobility, Youth, Skills and Innovation

19. On migration, the two sides recalled commitments made at the 5th AU-EU Summit held in Abidjan in November 2017, to deepen cooperation and dialogue on migration and mobility, and committed to developing a joint framework for a strengthened Continent-to-Continent dialogue on migration and mobility. They agreed to reinforce joint strategic management of refugees, migration and mobility at the continental level, guided by the respective migration policy frameworks of the two continents. In this respect, the two Commission agreed to work together to develop concrete proposals on all these matters for consideration by the EU-AU Summit in 2020.

20. The Commissions restate their shared commitment to provide assistance to those fleeing conflict and persecution, including IDPs, and recognise that the vast majority of African refugees are hosted on the African continent. They pledge to continue their efforts to provide protection in line with international standards, to create opportunities for refugees and host communities and to find sustainable solutions. They endeavour to fast track support to refugees and displacement response in Africa.

21. They noted the progress on implementation of the Abidjan priorities, through the work of the African Institute for Remittances in Kenya; as well as efforts directed towards the establishment and operationalization of the African Observatory on Migration in Morocco, the African Centre for the Study and Research on Migration in Mali, and the Continental Operational Centre in Khartoum, Sudan as a specialised office of the African Union Commission to fight smuggling of migrants and trafficking in human beings. They committed to intensify efforts in building capacity on migration management at continental, regional and national levels, as well as to explore ways to build on the experience of the AU-EU-UN trilateral Taskforce. In this context, they commended Niger and Rwanda for receiving Refugees and Asylum Seekers.

22. On youth and skills, the two Commissions took note of the progress realised in the implementation of agreed priorities in education, science, technology, innovation and skills development, notably the AU-EU Skills for Youth Employability Programme. They agreed on the need to strengthen cooperation through expanding the VET Mobility, apprenticeship and other work-based learning and career guidance to address the skills mismatch. They further noted the need for harmonisation of higher education to improve relevance of curricula, academic mobility, recognition of qualifications, quality assurance and accreditation, and agreed to support implementation of the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA).

23. The two sides further committed to continue cooperation in science, technology and innovation to address joint challenges and to support the implementation of the outcome of the 2019 high level policy dialogue on science, technology and innovation. They appreciated the progress made in the first phase of the Global Monitoring for Environment and Security (GMES) & Africa, which contributes to the African Outer Space Program, particularly in the earth observation domain in cooperation with the EU's Copernicus Programme. They committed to full implementation of GMES beyond the first phase.

STATEMENT/20/365

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