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**SECOND ORDINARY SESSION OF
THE AFRICAN UNION CONFERENCE OF
MINISTERS IN CHARGE OF COMMUNICATION
AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGIES
CAIRO, EGYPT**

AU/CIT/MIN/Rpt.(II)

**REPORT OF THE MINISTER'S SESSION
14 MAY 2008**

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The 2nd Ordinary Session of the African Union Ministers in charge of Communication and Information Technologies was held from 11 to 14 May 2008, in the conference Centre of the Fairmont Towers Hotel, Cairo, Arab Republic of Egypt. The experts' meeting held from 11 to 13 of May 2008 preceded the Ministerial Conference. The Ministers deliberated on the report of the Expert session and other Agenda items.

II. PARTICIPATION

2. The following Member States took part in the meeting: Algeria, Angola, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Egypt, Ethiopia, The Gambia, Guinea Bissau, Kenya, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Tanzania, Tunisia, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe,

III. OPENING CEREMONY

Statement by Mr. Briosas E. Gala, Special Adviser for Africa, European Commission,

3. H.E. Mr. Briosas E. Gala expressed his gratitude and the privilege to address the African Ministers in their Conference. He highlighted the ongoing EU-Africa Partnership on Infrastructure, the Partnership on the Information Society, Science and Space Technologies and about the role of the private sector in the EU's development aid.

4. H.E. Mr. Briosas E. Gala recall that the European Commission initiated, at the end of 2006, a joint dialogue platform with the African Union Commission to discuss with business what is needed to develop the private sector and launched the EU-Africa Business Forum, which has met since in Accra, in Ghana in June 2007.

5. The Joint EU-Africa Strategy and the EU-Africa Partnership on Science, Information Society and Space Technologies has been approved by the Heads of State during the EU-Africa Summit in Lisbon. A Joint Action Plan is currently on the table calls for concrete actions to be launched in the period 2008-2010, and results to be reviewed during the next EU-Africa Summit planned for 2010.

Through the EU-AU Task Force, a prolific collaboration has led to the identification of 5 priority projects that are in direct support to ARAPKE and that are to be considered as early deliverables for the Joint Action Plan.

6. H.E assured that the EU will prepare itself from its side. And urge that the African Union Member states do the same so that in the near future both Partners can sit together and come to a more significant contribution to the general objectives of ARAPKE.

Statement by Mr. Hamadoun TOURE, Secretary General, International Telecommunication Union,

7. Mr. H. TOURE thanks Egypt for the warm hospitality and highlighted that Egypt is a good example of continuing development of ICT in Africa.

8. He also pointed out that the African continent harbors enormous potential for development of Telecommunication and ICT sector. For proof of this is the exponential growth of mobile telephony.

9. Mr. H. TOURE has esteemed that our role is to transform this potential into a competitive industry and a lever for development and is to that end, that some key initiatives was launched such as, the African Regional Action Plan on the Knowledge Economy (ARAPKE), the Connect Africa Summit.

10. He recall that Telecommunication and ICT issues which have been discussed in the experts session are already reflected in the priorities assigned to the Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT) International Telecommunication Union (ITU). Therefore, Mr. H. TOURE committed himself that ITU will accompany the African Union in giving effect to the outcomes of the meeting.

Statement by H.E. Dr. Elham Mahmoud Ahmed Ibrahim, Commissioner for Infrastructure and Energy of the African Union Commission,

11. H.E Dr. Elham A. Ibrahim, started her speech by conveying the appreciations of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission to Arab Republic of Egypt and expressed the commission gratitude for the hospitality and the remarkable organizations of the conference.

12. She highlighted the importance of creating the enabling environment for the Telecommunication, ICT and Postal sector in order to create the African Information Society in light of the globalization context the world witnessing. She also underscored the challenges facing Africa and the need for better cooperation plans and to have win-win partnerships with the various development organizations.

13. Dr. Elham draw the attention to the condition of ICT Infrastructure in Africa as sighted in the international reports and statistics. Also on the need for more work to overcome the constraints and shortages in the connectivity between and among the African countries. She appreciated the various initiatives on Telecommunication, ICT and Postal at the National, Continental and International level and highlighted the strategic plans of the AUC with regards to bridging the digital divide and creates the African information society.

14. Dr. Elham recalled the first ordinary session of the CIT Ministerial Conference, its outcomes and the progress made and further stated the objectives of this second ordinary session and she valued highly the results and outcomes of its deliberations.

15. The Commissioner, Dr. Elham concluded her speech by reassuring the meeting on the determinations of the AUC to implement all the recommendations and decisions resulted from the conference.

Statement by H. E. Dr Tarek Kamel, Minister of Communication and Information Technology of the Arab Republic of Egypt

16. H. E. Dr Tarek Kamel, welcome all ministers and delegates to the Second African Union conference of ministers in charge of communication and information technologies and to Cairo who hosting for the third time the ITU Telecom Africa 2008.

17. He recalled that the African Union has successfully partnered with ITU and other leading organization to hold the Connect Africa Summit in Kigali on October 2007 and has also successfully collaborated with the European Union to create the EU-Africa partnership on Science, Information Society and Space. He further recalled that since it was launched in Cairo on April 2006, the ministerial Conference on CIT in Africa has been exploring the best way to kick-start. To that end, Egypt efforts have been directed towards supporting collective collaboration in implementing the Cairo Declaration adopted in 2006.

18. He highlighted some of the main activities that have been taken place such as the submission of the recommendation of the 1st Conference of Ministers in charge of CIT to 7th African Union Summit in Banjul in July 2006, the two meeting holed by the Steering Committee, the setting up of the ARAPKE working which meet two time.

19. After giving the trends of ICT at international and African levels, H.E Dr Tarek concluded his speech by expressing the commitments of Egypt to support all regional efforts to promote ICT in Africa.

IV. PROCEDURAL MATTERS

Election of Conference Bureau and Steering Committee

20. The Ministerial meeting elected the following Members to the Bureau and Steering Committee of CIT:

Western Africa

- **Federal Republic of Nigeria**, Member of the Bureau and the **Chair** of the African Union Conference of Ministers in charge of Communication and Information Technologies
- **Republic of Mali** Member of the Steering Committee

Eastern Africa:

- **Republic of Kenya** Member of the Bureau and **First Vice Chair**
- **Republic of Uganda**, Member of the Steering Committee

Southern Africa:

- **Republic of Zambia**, Member of the Bureau and the **Second Vice Chair**
- **Republic of South Africa** Member of the Steering Committee

Central Africa:

- **Republic of Chad** Member of the Bureau and **Third Vice Chair**
- **Republic of Democratic Republic of Congo** Member of the Steering Committee

Northern Africa

- **Arab Republic of Egypt** Member of the Bureau **Rapporteur of the Bureau**
- **Tunisian Republic** Member of the Steering Committee

Adoption of Agenda and Work Programme

21. The meeting adopted the following agenda:

Opening Ceremony

Procedural Matters

Working Sessions

- Consideration of the report of the Experts session
- Consideration and adoption of the Declaration
- Date and venue of the next CIT Ministerial Conference
- Any other business
- Consideration and adoption of the Ministerial session report

Closing ceremony

V. CONSIDERATION OF THE REPORT OF THE EXPERTS SESSION

22. The Chairperson of the Experts Meeting Ms. Samia Moussa, Deputy Director of International Relations at the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology in the Arab Republic of Egypt, presented the experts meeting report and highlighted the following items considered by the experts:

- Report of the steering committee of the African Union Conference of Ministers in charge of communication and information technologies;
- The African Union Commission (AUC) brief on the various activities, programmes and events that have been organized or attended by the commission at the Regional, Continental and International levels;
- The study on the reference framework for the harmonization of policies and regulations in the Telecommunications/ICT sector in Africa;
- The Study on strategies, policies and regulations for the development of postal services in Africa;
- Progress report on the African Regional Action Plan on Knowledge Economy;
- Briefing on other ICT Initiatives that included:
 - ITU report on the conclusions of the October 2007 "Connect Africa" Summit in Kigali (Rwanda) and the status of their implementation;

- GSM Association presentation;
- Digital Solidarity Fund (DSF) presentation on the 1% digital solidarity principle;
- Intel Presentation on Broadband Connectivity;
- The African Network of the Global Alliance for ICT and Development (GAID); and
- ICANN presentation on its transformation phases
- Presentation on Internet Governance Forum

23. The report highlighted the following key points and recommendations:

- The need to improve national Telecommunications /ICT policies of the AU Member States and to align it with those proposed by AUC in the reference framework.
- The necessity for Member States and RECs to improve their national postal policy and to align it with those proposed by AUC and the urgency for establishing an autonomous regulator that takes into account postal services
- The need to mobilize resources to accelerate the implementation of the selected ARAPKE flagship projects considering that priority should be given to infrastructure and capacity building.
- Selection of three ARAPKE flagship projects to be implemented under the EU-Africa partnership.
- The need to establish CIT fund to foster the implementation of the ARAPKE flagship projects.

24. At the end of their discussions, the Ministers adopted the expert report

VI. CONSIDERATION AND ADOPTION OF THE DECLARATION

25. The Ministers adopted the Declaration entitle “**2008 Cairo Declaration**” with incorporation of amendments coming from their discussion.

VII. DATE AND VENUE OF THE NEXT CIT MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE

26. The Ministers have decided that the meeting to be held on May 2010 in Abuja.

VIII. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

27. Ghana delegation invited the participant to attend the following event organized by the Government of Ghana and ITU:

Forum on Telecommunications Development:	26 – 28 May 2008, Accra
Africa Preparatory meeting of the WTSA 2008:	29 - 30 May 2008, Accra

IX. CLOSING SESSION

28. At the closing, a vote of thanks for Egyptian Authorities was read by a delegate. The Commissioner of Infrastructure and Energy and the Chair thanked then participants for the outcomes of the meeting.