

**DECISION ON THE OUTCOME OF THE RETREAT OF THE  
ASSEMBLY OF THE AFRICAN UNION ON THE INSTITUTIONAL  
REFORM OF THE AFRICAN UNION**

The Assembly,

1. **TAKES NOTE** of the Report on *“The Imperative to Strengthen our Union: Proposed Recommendations for the Institutional Reform of the African Union”* submitted by H.E. Mr. Paul Kagame, President of the Republic of Rwanda, to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Retreat of Heads of State and Government at the AU Headquarters, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia held on 29 January 2017;
2. **COMMENDS** H.E. Mr. Paul Kagame, President of the Republic of Rwanda, and the High Level Team of Experts for the excellent study undertaken on the institutional reform of the African Union (AU) and the proposals for a system of governance for the AU to enable it address the challenges facing the continent, and for submitting his report in a timely manner, as mandated by Decision Assembly/AU/Dec.606 (XXVII) adopted in Kigali, Rwanda in July 2016;
3. **ALSO TAKES NOTE** of the recommendations for the proposed reforms to further strengthen the African Union, in the following five (5) areas:
  - a) **Focus on key priorities with continental scope;**
  - b) **Realign African Union institutions in order to deliver against those priorities;**
  - c) **Connect the African Union to its citizens;**
  - d) **Manage the business of the African Union efficiently and effectively at both the political and operational levels;**
  - e) **Finance the African Union sustainably and with the full ownership of the Member States.**
4. **WELCOMES** the comments and observations made by Member States aimed at reinforcing the proposals and identifying the way forward with special emphasis on Pan-African values of unity, solidarity, freedom and equality, and the vision of our Founders of a political and economic Union. We reiterate the importance of African Common Positions as the most effective way of advancing Africa’s voice and representation in the world;
5. **ADOPTS** the recommendations in the Report as amended by Member States during the Retreat’s deliberations contained in Annex I to this Decision and, in particular, the following:
  - a) **On realigning African Union institutions in order to deliver against those priorities**

- i) The Commission should initiate, without delay, a professional audit of bureaucratic bottlenecks and inefficiencies that impede service delivery and the recommendations thereof;
- ii) The Permanent Representatives Committee's (PRC) Rules of Procedures should be reviewed and be in line with the mandate provided for in the Constitutive Act of the African Union. The PRC should facilitate communication between the African Union and national capitals, and act as an advisory body to the Executive Council, and not as a supervisory body of the Commission.

**b) On connecting the African Union to its citizens**

- (i) The Commission should establish women and youth quotas across its institutions, and identify appropriate ways and means to ensure the private sector's participation;
- (ii) The Commission should establish an African Youth Corps, as well as develop programs to facilitate cultural and sports exchange among Member States.

**c) On managing the business of the African Union efficiently and effectively, at both political and operational levels**

**On political management of the Union**

- i) The African Union Assembly shall handle an agenda of no more than three (3) strategic items at each Summit, in line with the Me'kelle Ministerial Retreat recommendations. Other appropriate business will be delegated to the Executive Council;
- ii) The Assembly shall hold one Ordinary Summit per year, and shall hold extraordinary sessions as the need arises;
- iii) In place of the June/July Summit, the Bureau of the African Union Assembly shall hold a coordination meeting with the Regional Economic Communities, with the participation of the Chairpersons of the Regional Economic Communities, the AU Commission and Regional Mechanisms. Ahead of this meeting, the AU Commission shall play a more active coordination and harmonisation role with the Regional Economic Communities, in line with the Treaty establishing of the African Economic Community (the Abuja Treaty);
- iv) External parties shall only be invited to Summits on an exceptional basis and for a specific purpose determined by the interests of the African Union;

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- v) Partnership Summits convened by external parties shall be reviewed with a view to providing an effective framework for African Union partnerships. Africa will be represented by the Troika, namely the current, incoming and outgoing Chairpersons of the African Union, the Chairperson of the AU Commission, and the Chairpersons of the Regional Economic Communities as well as the Chairperson of the NEPAD;
  - vi) To ensure continuity and effective implementation of Assembly decisions, a troika arrangement between the outgoing, the current, and the incoming African Union Chairpersons shall be established. In this regard, the incoming chairperson shall be selected one year in advance;
  - vii) Heads of State shall be represented at Summits by officials not lower than the level of Vice President, Prime Minister or equivalent<sup>3</sup>;
  - viii) The current sanctions mechanism should be strengthened and enforced. This would include consideration of making participation in the African Union deliberations contingent on adherence to Summit decisions.
- d) **On Financing the African Union sustainably and with the full ownership of the Member States**
- i) The Kigali Decision on Financing of the Union (Assembly/AU/Dec.605 (XXVII)) should be implemented in full and without undue delay;
  - ii) The Committee of Ten Finance Ministers will assume responsibility for oversight of the African Union budget and Reserve Fund (in para D(iii)), and develop a set of 'golden rules', establishing clear financial management and accountability principles;
  - iii) After funding of the budget of the African Union and the Peace Fund, the balance of the proceeds of the 0.2% AU levy on eligible imports, the Committee of Ten Finance Ministers will look into placing surplus in a Reserve Fund for continental priorities as decided by the Assembly;
  - iv) The current scale of contributions should be revised based on the principles of ability to pay, solidarity, and equitable burden-sharing, to avoid risk concentration.

**6. FURTHER DECIDES** as follows:

- i) Mandate H.E. Mr. Paul Kagame, President of the Republic of Rwanda in his capacity as the lead on the institutional reform of the Union, in collaboration

<sup>3</sup> The State of Eritrea entered a reservation.

with H.E. President Idriss Deby Itno, President of the Republic of Chad in his capacity as the outgoing Chairperson and H.E. Alpha Conde, President of the Republic of Guinea in his capacity as the current Chairperson, to supervise the implementation process;

ii) The Incoming Commission elected at the January 2017 Summit shall put in place a Reform Implementation Unit at the AU Commission, within the Bureau of the Chairperson, responsible for the day-to-day coordination and implementation of this Decision;

iii) H.E President Paul Kagame shall make recommendations on a mechanism to ensure that legally binding decisions and commitments are implemented by Member States;

iv) H.E. President Paul Kagame shall also report at each Ordinary Session of the Assembly on progress made with the implementation of this decision.

7. **REQUESTS**H.E. President Paul Kagame to report on the implementation of this Decision to the next ordinary session of the Assembly in July 2017.



**ANNEX**  
**TO ASSEMBLY DECISION ON THE OUTCOME OF THE RETREAT OF**  
**THE ASSEMBLY OF THE AFRICAN UNION ON INSTITUTIONAL**  
**REFORM OF THE AFRICAN UNION**

**A. On focus on key priorities with continental scope:**

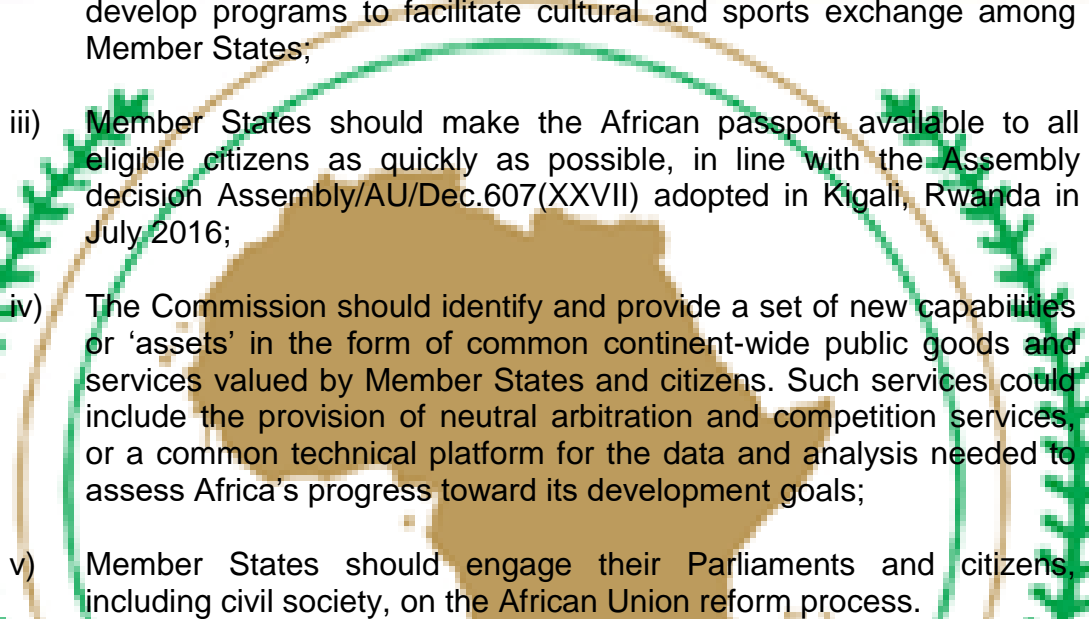
- i) The African Union should focus on a fewer number of priority areas, which are by nature continental in scope, such as political affairs, peace and security, economic integration (including the Continental Free Trade Area), and Africa's global representation and voice;
- ii) There should be a clear division of labour and effective collaboration between the African Union, the Regional Economic Communities (RECs), the Regional Mechanisms (RMs), the Member States, and other continental institutions, in line with the principle of subsidiarity.

**B. On realigning African Union institutions in order to deliver against those priorities**

- i) The Commission's structures should be re-evaluated to ensure that they have the right size and capabilities to deliver on the agreed priorities;
- ii) The Commission's senior leadership team should be lean and performance-oriented;
- iii) NEPAD should be fully integrated into the Commission as the African Union's development agency, aligned with the agreed priorities and underpinned by an enhanced results-monitoring framework;
- iv) The African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) should be strengthened to track implementation and oversee monitoring and evaluation in key governance areas of the continent;
- v) The roles and functions of the African Union judicial organs and the Pan-African Parliament should be reviewed and clarified, and their progress to date assessed;
- vi) The Peace and Security Council (PSC) should be reformed to ensure that it meets the ambition foreseen in its Protocol, by strengthening its working methods and its role in conflict prevention and crisis management;
- vii) The Permanent Representatives Committee's (PRC) Rules of Procedures should be reviewed and be in line with the mandate provided for in the Constitutive Act of the African Union. The PRC should facilitate communication between the African Union and

national capitals, and act as an advisory body to the Executive Council, and not as a supervisory body of the Commission.

**C. On connecting the African Union to its citizens**

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- i) The Commission should establish women and youth quotas across its institutions and identify appropriate ways and means to ensure the private sector's participation;
  - ii) The Commission should establish an African Youth Corps, as well as develop programs to facilitate cultural and sports exchange among Member States;
  - iii) Member States should make the African passport available to all eligible citizens as quickly as possible, in line with the Assembly decision Assembly/AU/Dec.607(XXVII) adopted in Kigali, Rwanda in July 2016;
  - iv) The Commission should identify and provide a set of new capabilities or 'assets' in the form of common continent-wide public goods and services valued by Member States and citizens. Such services could include the provision of neutral arbitration and competition services, or a common technical platform for the data and analysis needed to assess Africa's progress toward its development goals;
  - v) Member States should engage their Parliaments and citizens, including civil society, on the African Union reform process.

**D. On managing the business of the African Union efficiently and effectively, at both political and operational levels**

**On operational management**

- i) The election of the Chairperson of the AU Commission should be enhanced by a robust, merit-based, and transparent selection process;
- ii) The Deputy Chairperson and Commissioners should be competitively recruited in line with best practice and appointed by the Chairperson of the Commission, to whom they should be directly accountable, taking into account gender and regional diversity, amongst other relevant considerations;
- iii) The Deputy Chairperson role should be reframed to be responsible for the efficient and effective functioning of the Commission's administration;
- iv) The title of Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson may also be reconsidered;



- v) A fundamental review of the structure and staffing needs of the organisation, as well as conditions of service, should be undertaken to ensure alignment with agreed priority areas.

**E. On Financing the African Union sustainably and with the full ownership of the Member States**

- i) The Kigali Decision on Financing of the Union (Assembly/AU/Dec.605 (XXVII)) should be implemented in full and without undue delay;
- ii) The Committee of Ten Finance Ministers should assume responsibility for oversight of the African Union budget and Reserve Fund (in para D(iii)), and develop a set of 'golden rules', establishing clear financial management and accountability principles;
- iii) After funding of the budget of the African Union and the Peace Fund, the balance of the proceeds of the 0.2% AU levy on eligible imports, the Committee of Ten Finance Ministers should look into placing surplus in a Reserve Fund for continental priorities as decided by the Assembly;
- iv) The current scale of contributions should be revised based on the principles of ability to pay, solidarity, and equitable burden-sharing to avoid risk concentration.

