

AFRICAN UNION

الاتحاد الأفريقي



UNION AFRICAINE

UNIÃO AFRICANA

Addis Ababa, ETHIOPIA

P. O. Box 3243

Telephone : 517 700

Fax : 517844/512622

Website: www.au.int

**COMMUNIQUÉ OF THE TELECONFERENCE MEETING
OF THE BUREAU OF THE ASSEMBLY OF THE AFRICAN UNION (AU)
HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT WITH CHAIRPERSONS OF
REGIONAL ECONOMIC COMMUNITIES (RECs) OF THE AFRICAN UNION
HELD ON 20 AUGUST 2020**

His Excellency, President Matamela Cyril Ramaphosa of the Republic of South Africa, and Chairperson of the African Union (AU) convened and presided over the third teleconference Meeting of the Bureau of the Assembly of AU Heads of State and Government with Chairpersons of the AU Regional Economic Communities (RECs) on 20 August 2020.

Members of the Bureau participated in the Meeting as follows: His Excellency, President Félix Tshisekedi of the Democratic Republic of Congo; and His Excellency, President Uhuru Muigi Kenyatta of the Republic of Kenya; and His Excellency, Prime Minister Moustafa Madbouly of the Arab Republic of Egypt, representing His Excellency President Abdel Fatah Al-Sisi;

Seven (7) Regional Economic Communities (RECs) of the AU were represented in the Meeting namely:

- Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), Chaired by His Excellency President Ali Bongo of the Republic of Gabon;
- East African Community (EAC), Chaired by His Excellency President Paul Kagame of the Republic of Rwanda;
- Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Chaired by His Excellency President Issoufou Mahamadou of the Republic of Niger;
- Southern Africa Development Community (SADC)-Chaired by His Excellency President Filipe Nyusi of the Republic of Mozambique;
- Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), Chaired by His Excellency Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok of the Republic of Sudan; and
- Arab Maghreb Union (AMU), H.E. Mr Mohammed Taher Sayila, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Libya who participated on behalf of the Chairman of the Presidential Council of Libya and Prime Minister of the Government of National Accord (GNA), Mr Fayez Mustafa al-Sarraj of the Libyan Arab Republic.

- Community of Sahel–Saharan States (CEN–SAD), H.E. Mr Amine Abba Sidick, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Chad, who participated on behalf of His Excellency President Idriss Deby Itno of the Republic of Chad;

The Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Mr Moussa Faki Mahamat, and the Director of the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC), Dr John Nkengasong, as well as the AU Special Envoys on COVID-19 also participated in the Meeting.

In his opening remarks, His Excellency President Matamela Cyril Ramaphosa of the Republic of South African and the Chairperson of the African Union, outlined the objective of the Meeting, namely to assess progress with respect to the mobilisation of international economic support for the Continental fight against the novel coronavirus (COVID-19), and to guide the AU Special Envoys on COVID-19 ahead of forthcoming critical engagements with international financial institutions, and other members of the international community. The Meeting was also called to review the status with regard to the implementation of the AU COVID-19 Strategy. In this regard, the Meeting presented a platform for the Chairpersons of the Regional Economic Communities to provide an update on their coordinating efforts at regional level, including strategies to effectively respond and manage the threat posed by the pandemic.

H.E. President Ramaphosa expressed his profound appreciation to Members of the Bureau and Chairpersons of Regional Economic Communities (RECs) for their commitment to the implementation of the AU COVID-19 Strategy. In this context, President Ramaphosa reiterated the importance of coordination between the AU and the REC, and within and across RECs.

The Heads of State and Government expressed gratitude to the Chairperson of the AU Commission, Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat following his briefing on the implementation of the Africa COVID-19 pandemic strategy, especially the remarkable progress in implementing the Partnership to Accelerate COVID-19 Testing (PACT) initiative with over 10 million tests conducted since PACT was launched. They also endorsed the recently launched AUC/Africa CDC campaign on “Africa Against COVID-19: saving lives, economies, and livelihoods”

The Heads of State and Government took note and appreciated the update on the status of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Continent, presented by the Director of the Africa CDC, Dr Nkengasong. They noted with concern the over 1 million confirmed cases of the COVID-19 pandemic and over 26 000 fatalities that have been recorded across the Continent. At the same time, the Heads of State and Government welcomed the high rate of recoveries in the Continent. They however, cautioned that the COVID-19 pandemic situation remains serious and urged Member States to exercise caution in the easing of restrictions on socio-economic activity.

The Heads of State and Government renewed their call for Member States to contribute towards the AU COVID-19 Solidarity Fund, which is critical in the effective implementation of the Continental strategy. They endorsed the Africa's COVID-19 vaccine development and access strategy presented by the Director of Africa CDC, and called for the acceleration of African involvement in vaccine development, Africa's access to vaccine supply, and the removal of barriers to vaccine delivery and uptake. The Heads of State and Government stressed that Africa should take appropriate measures, as part of the strategy, to ensure that it secures timely access to COVID-19 vaccines when they become available.

While the Heads of State and Government welcomed the flexibility displayed by financial institutions and their disbursements to African countries in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic, they renewed their call for (a) a debt moratorium to be refined and extended to December 2021 with the expectation that multilateral institutions and bilateral creditors outside the Paris Club participate; (b) a market friendly solution, to safeguard access to private sector markets in the future; (c) an early replenishment of the IMF Poverty Reduction and Growth Trust (PRGT) and the World Bank International Development Association (IDA); (d) an early decision on the Special Drawing Rights; (e) a general capital increase for the AFREXIMBANK which has played a major countercyclical role in recent months; and (f) the IMF to consider a second round of measures before the end of the year, and to ensure that countries that have not been able to access support so far are included, taking into account neighborhood effects of excluding those countries.

The Heads of State and Government took note with satisfaction that forty six (46) countries have thus far subscribed to the African Medical Supply Platform which was launched in June 2020, with twenty-three (23) countries in the process of ordering medical supplies through the Platform.

The Heads of State and Government reaffirmed their support for Continental efforts to procure critical personal protective equipment and other diagnostic and therapeutic supplies, and to ensure that African countries are at the front of the queue once a vaccine is developed.

The Heads of State and Government welcomed six (6) Caribbean Community (CARICOM) countries who have joined the African Medical Supply Platform and are purchasing medical supplies through the platform. The extension and inclusion of fraternal CARICOM countries on the platform is a concrete manifestation of cooperation and solidarity with the Diaspora.

The Heads of State and Government commended the Special Envoys for their efforts to mobilise international resources to support Member States in their fight against the

pandemic and to mitigate the negative socio-economic effects on the people of Africa. The excellent work undertaken on the Platform was also acknowledged.

The Heads of State and Government condemned the unconstitutional change of government in Mali, and called for the immediate, unconditional release of President Ibrahim Boubacar Keïta, including members of his government. They demanded a swift restoration of the constitutional order in the country. They further expressed their full support to the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) for its sustained efforts in assisting the Malian stakeholders to find a consensual, peaceful and lasting solution to the current crisis in the country.

The Heads of State and Government conveyed their gratitude to H.E. President Ramaphosa for convening the 3rd Meeting of the Bureau with Chairpersons of RECs, and thanked him for his inspiring leadership at this time of crises, transition and opportunity in Africa and the world.

The Heads of State and Government agreed to remain seized of this matter.

ENDS.