

AFRICAN UNION

الاتحاد الأفريقي



UNION AFRICAINE

UNIÃO AFRICANA

**EXTRA-ORDINARY CONFERENCE OF AFRICAN
UNION MINISTERS IN CHARGE OF COMMUNICATION
AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGIES**

Johannesburg, SOUTH AFRICA

2-5 November, 2009

**OLIVER TAMBO DECLARATION
JOHANNESBURG 2009**

DECLARATION

PREAMBLE

WE, the African Union Ministers in charge of Communication and Information Technologies, have met in the Extraordinary Session on the 5th of November 2009 in Johannesburg, Republic of South Africa;

GUIDED BY the Constitutive Act and Vision of the African Union (AU);

RECALLING the Executive Council Decision (EX.CL/238. (VII)) on establishment of the Communication and Information Ministerial Conference (CITMC);

RE-AFFIRMING that Information and Communication Technologies are key to Africa's development and economic competitiveness in the attainment of the African Union vision and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs);

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT the African Regional Action Plan on the Knowledge Economy (ARAPKE) that was adopted by the Executive Council of the African Union DEC. EX.CL/261 (IX), Khartoum 2006 and the decision DEC. EX.CL/434 (XIII) on the endorsement of its flagship projects, Sharm El Sheikh 2008;

ALSO TAKING INTO ACCOUNT the African Heads of State and Government Declaration on supporting the programme of Infrastructure development in Africa (PIDA) Assembly/AU/9(XII), Addis Ababa 2009;

RECALLING the decision DEC. EX.CL/434 (XIII) of the 13th Ordinary Session of the Executive Council in Sharm El-Sheikh, 2008 calling on the AU Commission, in collaboration with the Regional Economic Communities (RECs), Specialised Institutions, Member States and other stakeholders to take the necessary measures to speed up the implementation of the Reference Framework for Harmonization for Telecommunication ICT Policy and Regulation, the Strategies and Action Plans for the development of a Postal Sector in Africa, and the ARAPKE with a view to develop a strong, integrated and the viable communications sector in the continent;

ALSO RECALLING the decision DEC. EX.CL/434 (XIII) of the 13th Ordinary Session of the AU Executive Council on the establishment of a Communication and Information Technologies Fund to foster the implementation of ARAPKE before 2010;

CONSIDERING the vital role of ICTs in socio-economic development including infrastructure and government services delivering, and its contribution to regional and Continental integration;

APPLAUDING the decision of the Heads of State and Government to dedicate the 14th Ordinary Session of the January 2010 Assembly to the theme; “Information and Communication Technologies in Africa: Challenges and Prospects for Development”;

TAKING NOTE of the Report of the Experts Meeting held from the 2nd to the 4th of November 2009, in Johannesburg, Republic of South Africa.

COMMITMENTS

WE HEREBY COMMIT OURSELVES TO:

1. **ESTABLISH** mechanisms to accelerate and monitor the implementation of ARAPKE, the Reference Framework for Harmonization for Telecommunication ICT and Policy Regulatory, the Strategies and Action Plans for the development of the Postal Sector in Africa;
2. **PROMOTE** Regional integration through the development and implementation of harmonized regional, continental policies and conducive regulatory frameworks for affordable and reliable broadband infrastructure development and private sector investment;
3. **WORK TOGETHER** to protect African geographic and heritage names, traditional knowledge, and traditional cultural expressions which are recognized as economic assets in the information society;
4. **ENSURE** that ICT policies are mainstreamed in other sectors at national, regional and continental levels;
5. **INTEGRATE** ICTs into National Imperative Programmes including Education Training Systems and the public administration with a view to produce a critical mass and increase skilled human capital and promote access and use of ICTs at 10% growth rate per annum;
6. **PROMOTE** ICT R&D initiatives in national imperative to ensure innovation and development within the framework of Africa’s Science and Technology Research

Programs (Consolidated Plan of Action of endorsed by the Executive Council in Khartoum 2006, EXL/254 (VII));

7. **WORK TOGETHER** to promote the use of Country Code Top Level Domains (ccTLDs) as they are a critical national resource whilst ensuring that the technical and administrative operations are at international standards to foster trust and use of African Domain Names in order to bring financial, economic and social-cultural benefits to Africa.
8. **PROMOTE** the transition of Broadcasting from Analog to digital.
9. **PROMOTE** South-South cooperation.

DIRECTIVES

WE HEREBY DIRECT THE AU COMMISSION TO

1. Develop a biennial ICT outlook in order to facilitate the evidence based policy formulation, peer review evaluation and ensure better utilization of the resources for the development of the sector;
2. Develop standards and guidelines for African Postal Services and Strategies to promote the utilization of ICT for the sector development;
3. Promote a massive penetration and use of ICTs into local communities using African languages including codification programs to fit into IT standards, and encourage the development of African Content-based applications to give them rightful place in the information society;
4. Develop common definition, understanding, concept and guidelines on open access, in coordination with relevant stakeholders;
5. Jointly develop with the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, under the framework of the African Information Society Initiative (AISI) a convention on cyber legislation based on the Continent's needs and which adheres to the legal and regulatory requirements on electronic transactions, cyber security, and personal data protection. It is recommended that AU Member States adopt this convention by 2012;

6. AU Commission to work closely with African Telecommunication Union (ATU) and other relevant stakeholders to encourage regional ICT regulators to establish an African regulatory body;
7. To conduct a continental study on telephone numbering based on the work already done.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on these commitments and directives, we recommend to the Assembly of Heads of State and Government to:

1. Urge the AU Commission, UNECA, RECs, Member States and specialized institutions in coordination with all other African ICT stakeholders to establish appropriate institutional arrangements and mechanisms to interconnect ICT backbones including national and regional Internet Exchange Points within Africa and the rest of the world with objective of lowering the tariffs and providing better quality of service;
2. Direct the Ministers of Finance to work in close cooperation with the Ministers in charge of CITs in order to identify innovative funding mechanisms to enable Member States to contribute to the African Union Communication and Information Technologies Fund.

APPRECIATION

We **EXPRESS** our gratitude to H.E. PRESIDENT Jacob Gedleyihlekisa Zuma and the People of the Republic of South Africa for their warm hospitality and excellent organization of this conference.