



**Economic Commission for Africa
Conference of African Ministers of Finance,
Planning and Economic Development**
Forty-ninth session

**African Union
Specialized Technical Committee on Finance,
Monetary Affairs, Economic Planning and
Integration**
Second session

**Ninth Joint Annual Meetings of the African Union
Specialized Technical Committee on Finance,
Monetary Affairs, Economic Planning and Integration
and the Economic Commission for Africa Conference
of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and
Economic Development**
Addis Ababa, 4 and 5 April 2016

Report of the Joint Committee of Experts [final version]

Introduction

1. The meeting of the Joint Committee of Experts of the ninth Joint Annual Meetings of the African Union Specialized Technical Committee on Finance, Monetary Affairs, Economic Planning and Integration and the Economic Commission for Africa Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development was held in Addis Ababa from 31 March to 3 April 2016.

Part One

I. Opening of the meeting [agenda item 1]

A. Attendance

2. The meeting was attended by representatives of the following member States: Algeria, Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Republic of the Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Sudan, Swaziland, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

3. The meeting was attended by a representative of the following associate member: Western Sahara.
4. Observers from the following States Members of the United Nations were present: Argentina, Australia, Bangladesh, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Cuba, Denmark, Ecuador, France, Finland, Germany, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Japan, Kazakhstan, Mexico, Netherlands, Norway, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).
5. The State of Palestine, a non-member observer State of the United Nations, was also represented.
6. The following regional economic communities were represented: Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa, East African Community, Economic Community of Central African States, Economic Community of West African States, Intergovernmental Authority on Development, Southern African Customs Union, Southern African Development Community, West African Economic and Monetary Union.
7. The following United Nations bodies and specialized agencies were represented: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, International Labour Organization, International Monetary Fund International Telecommunication Union, International Organization for Migration, Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, United Nations Office for Project Services, United Nations Capital Development Fund, United Nations Children's Fund, United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, United Nations Environment Programme, United Nations Human Settlements Programme, United Nations Industrial Development Organization, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, United Nations Office to the African Union, United Nations Population Fund, World Bank, World Food Programme, World Health Organization.
8. Representatives of the following intergovernmental and regional organizations were present: African Development Bank, League of Arab States, New Partnership for Africa's Development Planning and Coordinating Agency, Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.
9. Observers were present from the following organizations: Action Aid Ethiopia, Advectas, Afei Diagnosis Center, Africa Forum, African Capacity-Building Foundation, African Economist, African Tax Administration Forum, AgriDevCo, Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa, Arab Reform Initiative, China Hyway Group, China-Africa Business Council, China-Africa Development Fund, Chongqing Haifu Medical Technologies, Consulting Development Associates, Deer Jet Medical Company, Echnoserbe Consulting, Fight Against Desert Encroachment, Garment Industry Transparency Initiative, Gavi the Vaccine Alliance, German Agency for International Cooperation, Global Green Growth Institute, Green Thinkers Youth Association and Network for African Youth Development, GRID-Arendal, International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas, International Planned Parenthood Federation, International Road Transport Union, Jiangsu Bioperfectus Technologies, Mother and Child Multisectoral Development Organization /BlueEnergy, One Campaign, Oxfam, Pan-African Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Poken Team, Reality of Aid African Network, Rotary International, Sanbao Pharmaceuticals, Save the Children, Shapoorji Pallonji, Tax Justice

Network Africa, Times of Zambia, Transparency International Secretariat, Ubuntu Leadership Institute, Upbeat Marketing, Wideway Sinostar Investment, World Vision International, Wuhu Kanggi Pharmaceutical, Yuemei Group. Opening statements

B. Opening statements

10. The opening session of the Joint Annual Meetings of the African Union Specialized Technical Committee on Finance, Monetary Affairs, Economic Planning and Integration and the Economic Commission for Africa Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development was chaired by Naimi Aziz, Ambassador of the United Republic of Tanzania, on behalf of Hamisi Mwinyimvua, Chair of the outgoing Bureau of the Joint Committee of Experts, Deputy Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Finance and Planning of the United Republic of Tanzania.

11. The Chair's opening remarks were interrupted by the representatives of Morocco, who called for the postponement of the meeting on the grounds that they had received the programme of work and relevant conference documents on 16 March 2016, in breach of the 42-day rule of the Economic Commission for Africa. They also objected to the format of the meeting, demanding that deliberations are suspended until consensus is reached within and across countries represented at the meeting. The representatives of Senegal expressed their agreement with Morocco. The representatives of Uganda then asked for clarification on the procedures for convening the Joint Annual Meetings. In response, the Chair suggested that, in the absence of jointly agreed procedures between the African Union and the Economic Commission for Africa, the delay on the part of the secretariat in sending out the relevant conference documents was not grave enough to warrant the postponement of the meeting. In the ensuing discussion, the representatives of Liberia, South Africa and Uganda took the floor and said that, while the concerns raised by Morocco were valid, the meeting should proceed as planned. It was suggested that the issue of establishing joint procedures should be discussed as an agenda item or at another meeting, and that arrangements should be made so that the representatives of Morocco could discuss their concerns in detail. As no major objections were raised, the Chair then proceeded with the opening remarks.

12. In her opening remarks, the Chair welcomed all participants to the ninth Joint Annual Meetings and thanked the Government and people of Ethiopia for the warm reception accorded to all guests in Addis Ababa. She also commended the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, and the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa, Carlos Lopes, on the excellent organizational arrangements. She went on to remark that the theme of the 2016 Conference of Ministers, "Towards an integrated and coherent approach to implementation, monitoring and evaluation of Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals," built on the deliberations and recommendations of the 2015 Conference of Ministers, on the theme: "Implementing Agenda 2063 – planning, mobilizing and financing for development", and was therefore critical in promoting the adoption of a common framework for implementing, monitoring and evaluating Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals. She emphasized that the success of both Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals depended heavily on their incorporation at the national level, and on coherence in planning and reporting mechanisms supported by robust statistics. That in return would accelerate the much needed inclusive and sustainable structural transformation on the continent.

13. Opening statements were then delivered by Anthony Mothae Maruping, Commissioner for Economic Affairs, African Union Commission; Abdalla

Hamdok, Deputy Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa; and Admasu Nebebe, Director, Ministry of Finance and Economic Cooperation of Ethiopia.

14. In his statement, Mr. Maruping thanked the experts for their attendance at a time of economic hardship on the continent, and noted that the meeting provided an invaluable opportunity for the exchange of views, sharing of experiences and collective decision on a way forward. He highlighted the decline in commodity demand and prices, which had led to cuts in production, increased unemployment, falling incomes, eroded tax bases and reduced foreign exchanges; the prolonged and severe drought that had affected agricultural production and disrupted the supply of hydropower, clean water and sanitation services; the floods which had displaced people, destroyed infrastructure and caused the spread of waterborne diseases; and the strengthening of the United States dollar, which had caused a jump in dollar-denominated external debt and had increased inflationary tensions. He indicated that, in combination, those factors had caused financial and macroeconomic imbalances, downward revision of growth rates, regressions in social and economic development, and an increase in poverty. He highlighted the importance, in that context of the ministerial round table to be held during the Conference on the theme: “Addressing the impact of drought; floods and declining commodity prices in Africa.”

15. He also noted that in 2015, amidst the adoption of key global initiatives such as the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, the Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement on climate change, the African Union had adopted Agenda 2063 and its first 10-year implementation plan and highlighted the comprehensive bottom-up approach through which Agenda 2063 and the first 10-year implementation plan had been formulated. He noted that Agenda 2063 was a timely and relevant framework for increasing productive capacities, strengthening competitiveness, fostering diversification, engendering value addition and enabling intra-African trade and the effective participation of Africa in global value chains.

16. In closing, he urged experts to embrace an integrated and coherent approach to the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals, as recommended by the Joint Coordination Committee of the chief executives of the African Union Commission, the regional economic communities, the Economic Commission for Africa and the African Development Bank and the African Capacity-Building Foundation at its meeting in 2016, and as was likely to be recommended by the Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa at its forthcoming meeting in April 2016.

17. In his opening statement, Mr. Hamdok pointed out that Agenda 2063 had been developed and adopted through a consultative process among African people, pan-African institutions and the leadership of the continent. Africa was now confronted with two interconnected processes: Agenda 2063 and its 10-year implementation plan at the continental level, and the transition from the Millennium Development Goals to the Sustainable Development Goals at the global level. He stressed that a shared understanding of those continental and global frameworks, including their relevance to national development agendas and the relationship between the two, would be crucial to their effective implementation. That understanding would provide an opportunity to implement the two agendas without unduly burdening policymakers with multiple development frameworks, while at the same time minimizing the related coordination challenges. It would also ensure that benefits were widely shared, with a view to reducing poverty and raising living standards for all Africans.

18. In that context, he recalled that the number of Africans living in absolute poverty remained high and that inequality was still a major concern as growth in many African countries had not been inclusive. Accordingly, the two frameworks should add momentum to the existing efforts to bring about Africa's structural transformation and to enhance trade, create jobs and increase income for African people through product diversification and value addition underpinned by industrialization. African countries should seek to enhance intra-African trade by strengthening regional integration, lowering the cost of trade and making a strong commitment to the creation of a continental free trade area. He noted the need to consider greening Africa's economic transformation to avoid the mistakes that developed countries had made and to build the capacities of African negotiators to secure better deals for their natural resources.

19. In closing, he called for continued support for the advocacy work led by the Chair of the High-level Panel on Illicit Financial Flows from Africa, Thabo Mbeki, and said he looked forward to fruitful discussions during the current Conference of Ministers.

20. Mr. Nebebe, speaking on behalf of his country's federal authorities, welcomed delegates to the meeting. He highlighted Africa's notable economic growth performance in recent years and the challenges facing the continent and stressed the need to explore bold and transformative options for sustained economic growth and inclusive and sustainable development. He also emphasized the need to leverage the synergies and complementarities of long-term global and regional development frameworks to facilitate the realization of the continent's aspirations for structural transformation. To that end, it was vital for countries to implement both agendas in a coherent and integrated manner.

21. Turning to how African countries implement and monitor implementation of the global and continental agendas, he underscored the substantial convergence of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as the latter had taken on board many of Africa's aspirations, as reflected in the common African position on the post-2015 development agenda. With a view to reducing the burden on national structures and ensuring coherent implementation, follow-up and review processes, he called for the development of an integrated results framework that embraced both the continental and global development agendas.

22. Turning to the experience of Ethiopia in integrating and mainstreaming global and continental development frameworks into its national development plan, he noted that the process required extensive consultations with a wide array of stakeholders, strengthened policymaking and statistical capacities, and the active participation of subnational institutions. He stated his expectation that the Conference would afford opportunities for sharing experiences, particularly on how sustainability could be integrated into national development plans, which was vital for the successful implementation of global and continental development agendas.

23. In conclusion, he stressed that the deliberations at the Conference of Ministers would have a significant bearing on Africa's efforts towards ensuring an integrated and coherent approach to the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals. His country remained committed to the implementation of both agendas, as they had a shared objective of changing the lives of the continent's 1 billion people.

II. Election of the Bureau and adoption of the agenda and programme of work [agenda item 2]

24. The following countries were unanimously elected by the Committee to form the new Bureau:

Chair:	South Africa (Southern Africa)
First Vice-Chair:	Democratic Republic of the Congo (Central Africa)
Second Vice-Chair:	Algeria (North Africa)
Third Vice-Chair:	Côte d'Ivoire (West Africa)
Rapporteur:	Uganda (East Africa)

25. The newly elected Chair delivered his statement. The Joint Committee then adopted the following agenda, based on the provisional agenda that had been circulated and as amended:

1. Opening of the meeting
2. Election of the Bureau and adoption of the agenda and programme of work
3. Overview of recent economic and social developments in Africa
4. Assessment of progress on regional integration in Africa
5. Presentation on the theme of the ninth Joint Annual Meetings: "Towards an integrated and coherent approach to the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals"
6. Selected social development issues
7. Status of statistical development in Africa
8. Statutory issues of the Economic Commission for Africa
9. Statutory issues of the African Union
10. Date and theme of the tenth Joint Annual Meetings
11. Other matters
12. Consideration and adoption of the draft report of the meeting of the Joint Committee of Experts and consideration and recommendation for adoption of the draft resolutions
13. Closing of the meeting

26. The representatives of Morocco continued to raise objections to the format of the meeting. They also objected to the participation of Western Sahara, which they believed was not in accordance with the rules of the United Nations. In response, the Chair informed the participants that the terms of reference and rules of procedure of the Economic Commission for Africa, a subsidiary body of the Economic and Social Council, as adopted by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 671 A (XXV) of 29 April 1958, provided that non-self-governing territories situated within the whole continent of Africa shall be associate members of the Commission. He said that the United Nations considered Western Sahara to be a non-self-governing territory under Chapter XI of the Charter of the United Nations. Therefore, Western

Sahara participated in sessions and meetings of the Commission on the basis of its associate membership of the Commission, in line with United Nations rules, practice and procedures and the various legal opinions and positions expressed by the Office of Legal Affairs, as well as the General Assembly in its resolution 34/37 of 21 November 1979, operative paragraph 7 of which states that the Frente Popular para la Liberación de Saguía el-Hamra y de Río de Oro is “the representative of the people of Western Sahara”. He said that as far as the United Nations was concerned, that position had not changed.

Part Two

Account of proceedings

III. Overview of recent economic and social developments in Africa [agenda item 3]

A. Presentation

27. The representative of the secretariat provided an overview of recent economic and social developments in Africa, highlighting the main messages in the overview report in document E/ECA/COE/35/2-AU/STC/FMEPI/EXP/2(II). Despite the global economic slowdown, Africa’s growth was still relatively strong and would remain positive in the medium term, underpinned by domestic demand, improved macroeconomic management, increasing public expenditure and diversification of trade and investment ties. There were still internal and external risks, however, including the weak global recovery, low commodity prices, tightening of monetary policy in the United States and the European Union, weather-related shocks, and security and political instability. Africa was also making steady progress towards social goals. Improvements had been registered in terms of poverty reduction, universal education, gender parity, under-5 mortality and access to safe drinking water, but progress remained limited. Absolute poverty numbers were on the rise, and only a marginal decline in unemployment had been observed, amidst an increasing working-age population. Meanwhile, rapid urbanization offered opportunities for growth and transformation. Looking ahead, Africa had made major gains in economic growth. The region therefore needed countercyclical fiscal policies, intra-African trade and integration and strategies to harness urbanization and the youth bulge for industrialization.

B. Discussion

28. In the ensuing discussion, experts noted that strong continental and subregional financial institutions and organizations were essential to provide support for investment programmes. In that regard, innovative strategies for domestic resource mobilization were critical, including tax reforms, unused financial resources such as pension funds, capital markets and savings. The potential for Governments to borrow on international markets was also highlighted. The sharing of experiences across countries in respect of domestic resource mobilization was noted.

29. The threat to macroeconomic stability from rising inflation in some countries in 2016 and the need for appropriate policy instruments was noted. African countries had, however, managed inflation risks and weathered the impact of global economic shocks relatively well. They could therefore engage

in countercyclical policies without risking macroeconomic instability. Reconciling short-term macroeconomic stabilization with long-term diversification strategies was thus possible with the right policy mix.

30. Employment creation was a core priority for Africa's transformation agenda and new approaches were needed to address that challenge. In that regard, technology transfer was essential for the development of innovative enterprises for employment creation, especially in sustainable development. Skills development and investment in research and development were also necessary to support commodity-based industrialization, value addition and the realization of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Furthermore, the urgent need to shift from informal to formal economic activities and employment by leveraging existing opportunities in the informal sector was emphasized.

31. Although experts acknowledged the progress made in advancing the continent's development agenda, they noted the need for domestic structural reforms to optimize development outcomes in the light of declining commodity prices and limited fiscal space. The commodities sector was also important in financing other industries and creating jobs.

32. In addition, a concern was raised that the report seemed to encourage a focus on traditional markets while market diversification might also be required. It was highlighted, however, that markets in both traditional and emerging markets were important.

C. Recommendations

33. In the light of the discussions, the Joint Committee made the following recommendations:

(a) Given the economic slowdown and Africa's dependence on commodities, the region needs to diversify its economic sectors and markets and adopt the right policy mix to enable African countries to withstand the effects of the economic crisis;

(b) As intra-African trade is more conducive to industrialization, Africa needs to produce more consumer goods and services for national and regional markets to reduce import reliance;

(c) There is an urgent need to shift from informal to formal economic activities and employment by leveraging existing opportunities in the informal sector through appropriate policies, structural reforms, and skills development;

(d) Recommendations on structural transformation should take into account the experience of countries from the global South;

(e) Africa's development model should be oriented in line with national contexts and priorities;

(f) Domestic resource mobilization should be the main strategy for financing Africa's development in a sustainable manner. In addition, international development partners should be encouraged to honour their official development assistance commitments.

IV. Assessment of progress on regional integration in Africa [agenda item 4]

A. Presentation

34. The representative of the secretariat outlined the status of regional integration at the subregional and continental levels, including the major achievements of the regional economic communities along the steps identified in the Abuja Treaty. Tremendous efforts had been made by all the Regional Economic Communities in the area of regional integration, but the pace of integration was relatively slow. Despite the achievements, the implementation of regional integration continued to face challenges such as poor infrastructure, poor governance, conflicts and insecurity, concerns over sovereignty, barriers to trade and the movement of people and overlapping memberships of regional economic communities.

35. He outlined the synergies between the objectives of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and observed that the two were complementary and that their implementation would therefore contribute significantly to the acceleration of the integration process on the African continent. He drew attention to the risk of prioritizing the implementation of global agendas rather than African ones, as had been done in the past. The adoption of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda brought new challenges to the regional economic communities and African countries. Countries should work towards aligning their respective strategic and development plans with Agenda 2063 and its first 10-year implementation plan, and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and should mobilize and allocate the necessary domestic resources for their implementation.

B. Discussion

36. In the ensuing discussion, it was noted that the pace of integration in Africa was relatively slow and that increased momentum was needed to meet the milestones established in the Abuja Treaty. Participants observed that strong continental institutions were needed to enable Africa to roll out its development agenda.

37. Experts were informed about the challenges that some countries experienced in applying Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda at the national level. An assessment of previous development agendas in terms of implementation and lessons learned could be critical to success in implementing the two agendas. Experts noted the need to implement the Agendas within national contexts, and that countries needed to adopt specific tools and mechanisms to successfully integrate the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063 into their national development plans. It was recommended that a road map be developed to facilitate the integration of the two agendas into national contexts.

38. Regarding the financing of Agenda 2063, it was noted that the dependency on partner funding represented a major impediment to the implementation of Africa's development plans, as witnessed in past experiences. Although many initiatives and solutions had been proposed, the lack of implementation represented a major challenge. It was therefore necessary for countries to mobilize internally the required financing.

C. Recommendations

39. In the light of the discussion, the Joint Committee made the following recommendations:

(a) Member States should step up the operationalization of the three pan-African financial institutions, namely, the African central bank, the African monetary fund and the African investment bank, by signing and ratifying the respective founding statutes;

(b) The African member States should take ownership of their continental development agendas by, among other strategies, implementing alternative and innovative financing mechanisms, including domestic resource mobilization;

(c) The African Union Commission and the Economic Commission for Africa should be requested to assist member States in designing a road map for the implementation of both Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the national level, and to put in place a common comprehensive and harmonized monitoring and evaluation framework for the two agendas.

V. Presentation on the theme of the ninth Joint Annual Meetings: towards an integrated and coherent approach to the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals [agenda item 5]

A. Presentation

40. The representative of the secretariat presented the draft concept note on the theme of the Conference of Ministers (E/ECA/COE/35/Inf/1-AU/STC/FMEPI/EXP/Info.1(II)), which focused on the background to Agenda 2063 and its objectives and outlined the objectives and thematic areas that would be considered by the Conference of Ministers. He stressed the need for harmonization, the harnessing of synergies, awareness-raising and a coherent development approach in the process of implementing Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

41. A steering committee comprising representatives of the African Union Commission, the Planning and Coordination Agency of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), the Economic Commission for Africa, the African Development Bank and the African Symposium on Statistical Development had been established to guide the process of developing a measurement framework for the first 10-year implementation plan of Agenda 2063 and to prepare progress reports on implementation for the African Union policy organs.

42. He highlighted the importance of convergence of the two frameworks, in particular since there were more goals in Agenda 2063 (20) than the Sustainable Development Goals (17) that were of particular relevance to Africa: Agenda 2063 also covered cultural, political and governance issues in addition to the social, economic and sustainability issues addressed by the Sustainable Development Goals. Work on integrating the frameworks into national planning systems had started in the fourth quarter of 2015, with a view to building awareness among State institutions and ordinary citizens, and promoting engagement and ownership of Agenda 2063 in order to catalyse and sustain momentum for transformation.

43. The African Union Commission, working together with the NEPAD Agency and the regional economic communities and supported by the Economic Commission for Africa and the African Development Bank, had started the process of developing a monitoring and evaluation system aimed at leveraging their respective strengths that would ultimately enhance their roles individually and collectively in the implementation of Agenda 2063. To that end, member States, regional economic communities and all implementing agencies had agreed to adopt a unified implementation, reporting and monitoring platform for continuous review of the findings of progress reports relating to both agendas, so as to avoid overburdening policymakers. In carrying out the first 10-year implementation plan of Agenda 2063, Africa would also be implementing the 2030 Agenda.

44. Since financing both agendas would require substantial financial and non-financial resources, he drew attention to the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, which, among other goals, called for the establishment of an infrastructure platform aimed at coordinating investments in infrastructure. That was in addition to a domestic resource mobilization strategy aimed at facilitating the development of the financial sector, with a view to widening the tax base. In conclusion, he called for the mobilization of resources to facilitate implementation of the two frameworks and their ambitious goals.

B. Discussion

45. In the ensuing discussion, experts recognized the need to harmonize Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda and to ensure their effective implementation by incorporating them in national frameworks. Harmonizing the agendas would avoid placing an excessive burden on the human and financial resources of member States. At the same time, account should be taken of the specificities of the continent and of the differences in the context, resource endowment and development priorities of each individual country. Member States also requested technical support from the African Union and the Economic Commission for Africa to offset their inadequate capacity for implementation.

46. Experts stressed the need to harmonize the terminology of the two agendas and to align their goals, priority areas, targets and indicators at the regional level. They underscored the importance of clear monitoring and evaluation and reporting mechanisms, which would bring together the two agendas and national priorities, as articulated in national development frameworks and medium-to-long term visions. In that context, they noted that the current mapping exercise conducted between Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda should be extended to align the harmonized framework with national development priorities. A clear reporting mechanism was recognized as being important for countries to assess progress, share experiences, learn from one another and improve implementation. They recognized that sound coordination between the different national sectors was essential to ensuring that the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the two agendas were effected in an integrated manner.

47. Experts identified financing constraints as the primary impediment to the effective implementation of the two agendas at the national level. In that context, and in line with the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, they emphasized the need to reduce dependency on external resources by identifying alternative sources of financing, primarily by enhancing domestic resource mobilization efforts. In that context, they called for further clarity on how to take full advantage of commitments made in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and stressed the need to curb illicit financial flows, which were costing the continent \$50 billion each year, as reported by the High-level Panel on Illicit Financial Flows. The development by the African Union Commission and the

Economic Commission for Africa, under the leadership of Thabo Mbeki, of measures to counter illicit financial flows was recognized.

48. Experts also identified the inadequacy and poor quality of data and statistics as constraints on the implementation of the two agendas, as good-quality and easily available data were critical for the setting of baselines and measurement of progress.

C. Recommendations

49. In the light of the discussion, the Joint Committee made the following recommendations:

(a) Countries should take steps to incorporate the harmonized framework in their own development planning systems and to adapt it to the specific contexts of their countries;

(b) The African Union Commission, supported by the Economic Commission for Africa, the African Development Bank, the NEPAD Agency, the African Capacity-Building Foundation, the regional economic communities and other partners, should harmonize the terminology relating to priority areas, goals, indicators and targets in the two agendas through the mapping exercise.

(c) At the continental level, the African Union Commission, supported by the Economic Commission for Africa, the African Development Bank, the NEPAD Agency, the regional economic communities and African statisticians, should establish a harmonized monitoring and evaluation and reporting framework for the agendas, while, at the national level, countries should coordinate their process of integrated reporting;

(d) The African Union Commission, supported by the Economic Commission for Africa and the African Development Bank and the NEPAD Agency, should continue to assist member States and regional economic communities in:

- (i) Incorporating Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals into national development plans and the strategic plans of regional economic communities;
- (ii) Adopting an integrated and coherent approach to implementation, monitoring and evaluation of Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals;
- (iii) Completing the design of a monitoring and evaluation framework that caters for both Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals;

(e) Measures to curb illicit financial flows should be intensified, including investment in a financial intelligence system in Africa; enhancing political commitment to fighting the problem of illicit financial flows; deepening engagement with receiving countries to tackle the unfavourable practices of multinationals by implementing the recommendations set out in the report of the High-level Panel on Illicit Financial Flows from Africa;

(f) The capacities of national institutions involved in revenue collection, including customs and revenue authorities, should be strengthened to improve domestic resource mobilization;

(g) Efforts should be made to rationalize national expenditures and the resulting savings should be redirected towards building and maintaining the good-quality infrastructure needed to enhance productive capacities on the continent;

(h) The capacity of national statistics systems should be strengthened to support effective implementation, monitoring and assessment of the two agendas.

VI. Selected social development issues [agenda item 6]

A. First five-year priority programme on employment, poverty eradication and inclusive development

1. Presentation

50. The representative of the secretariat, introducing the background paper on implementation of the first five-year priority programme on employment, poverty eradication and inclusive development, set out in document E/ECA/COE/35/12-AU/STC/FMEPI/EXP/12(II), recalled that the member States of the African Union had in 2015 adopted the Declaration and Plan of Action on Employment, Poverty Eradication and Inclusive Development and also the Joint Labour Migration Programme. The latter was being implemented by the African Union, the International Labour Organization, the International Organization for Migration and the Economic Commission for Africa, joined recently by the United Nations Development Programme.

51. The first five-year priority programme on employment, poverty eradication and inclusive development covered the six key priority areas of the Declaration and Plan of Action: political leadership, accountability and good governance; youth and women's employment; social protection and productivity for sustainable and inclusive growth; well-functioning and inclusive labour market institutions; labour migration and regional economic integration; and partnerships and resource mobilization.

52. The priority programme was linked to Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development through an alignment of indicators and targets. Regional economic communities and member States had a key role to play in adapting the priority programme and incorporating it into regional and national development plans, in line with the related indicators and targets of the first 10-year implementation plan for Agenda 2063, and with the associated process for incorporating continental policies into national development frameworks. The African Union Commission, regional economic communities and member States would also have to agree to incorporate the priority programme into regional and national development plans by the end of 2017.

2. Discussion

53. In the ensuing discussion, experts noted that the role of the developmental State in Africa had weakened. Social protection had not been adequately mainstreamed and prioritized in national development planning. In particular, social security for vulnerable groups, including persons with disabilities, needed to be strengthened. In that regard, they emphasized the importance of the welfare State in reducing inequalities through better redistribution policies, which should be applied to ensure decent employment and income.

54. They also highlighted the need to substantiate social development policies with reliable data, including in the areas of employment and social protection. To that end, the African Union Commission was collaborating with member States and partners to strengthen labour data and statistics. There was a critical need to reflect the informal sector in those statistics, as it accounted for most of Africa's employment.

55. Educational curricula were still not sufficiently aligned to the need of Africa's labour markets, an area where the role of national Governments was underscored. That was especially critical in the light of Africa's young population structure and the need to harness the demographic dividend. Member States should invest in enhancing the skills and capacities of youth, including through health and education.

56. The experience of some countries in respect of social protection, poverty reduction and employment policies and programmes was shared.

3. Recommendations

57. In the light of the discussion, the Joint Committee made the following recommendations:

(a) Member States should sharpen the focus on inequality and exclusion as sources of poverty in the context of social development policies;

(b) Member States should strengthen the productivity and capacities of the poor through adequate social protection measures, financial inclusion and the provision of decent jobs;

(c) Member States should enhance the role of technical and vocational education and training in the priority areas of the five-year priority programme in order to harness the demographic dividend and ensure an alignment of skills with the needs of the economies;

(d) Despite the challenges of data availability, member States should endeavour to integrate the informal sector into national development planning;

(e) The regional economic communities and the African Union Commission should agree on a road map for the incorporation of the five-year priority programme into regional and national planning by 2017, in line with the first 10-year implementation plan of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;

(f) Each member State should develop and implement national comprehensive employment policies backed by effective labour market information systems, inclusive labour market institutions and strong political will, with appropriate funding.

B. Addressing the challenge of international migration

1. Presentation

58. The representative of the secretariat outlined the context of migration in Africa, together with related key trends. Much of the migration of Africans was taking place within the continent, and the profile of migrants was increasingly young and feminized. Africa's youthful population offered great potential for economic development, yet high youth unemployment could also be a source of social and political instability. Remittances, which represented Africa's largest source of foreign inflows after foreign direct investment, had increased phenomenally over the past two decades.

59. Africa urgently needed to develop a common response to migration based on its own perspective and address some key challenges, including limited data availability, the lack of national migration strategies and incoherence across regional and subregional policy frameworks and strategies. Political support from member States to strengthen dialogue and coordination among key stakeholders was also critical.

2. Discussion

60. In the ensuing discussion, experts agreed that migration presented considerable opportunities for Africa. In the case of intra-Africa migration, Governments needed to assess and harness migrants' skills for their own development programmes. Remittances also represented a considerable source of economic growth and financing for development in Africa. Yet, there was a serious paucity of reliable and up-to-date statistics on migration in Africa. In particular, remittances were largely underestimated and monitored irregularly.

61. Experts also highlighted the linkages between migration, insecurity and terrorism. It was also noted, however, that countries should take a cautious approach and avoid over-securitizing the migration issue. They emphasized the importance of ensuring safe and orderly migration flows within and outside Africa, with full respect of the rights and dignity of migrants. That applied to origin, destination and transit countries.

62. In order to harness migration for Africa's development, it was important to strengthen institutions and macroeconomic stability, so as to restore confidence and encourage the inflows of remittances and investment. Accordingly, Africa needed more coordinated interventions and policy responses on migration. In that respect, it was noted that the region had already put in place continental strategies, including the Joint Labour Migration Programme, the Declaration on Migration of the June 2015 African Union Summit, and the African Institute for Remittances. It was necessary to continue to build on what existed while identifying gaps.

3. Recommendations

63. In the light of the discussion, highlighting the crucial question of addressing the root causes of migration and establishing a link between migration and development, the Joint Committee made the following recommendations:

(a) Accurate databases should be established for recording migrant flows and skills, including mapping migration patterns at both national and regional levels;

(b) The African Union Commission, supported by the Economic Commission for Africa, the African Development Bank, the NEPAD Agency and the regional economic communities, should set up a continental initiative to negotiate and intervene on behalf of migrants to protect them on hazardous international routes;

(c) Member States should harness the role of remittances as a source of economic growth and development in Africa by creating an institutional environment and policies conducive to attracting inflows and investment;

(d) The African Union Commission, supported by the Economic Commission for Africa, the African Development Bank, the NEPAD Agency and the regional economic communities, should strengthen their coordination on migration in Africa;

(e) Member States should create economic opportunities for youth in Africa in order to retain skills and to limit unsafe and irregular migration;

(f) The African Union Commission and the Economic Commission for Africa should work together to develop a continental strategy to address the issue of irregular migration in collaboration with the international community and in the framework of shared responsibilities.

VII. Status of statistical development in Africa [agenda item 7]

A. Presentation

64. The representative of the secretariat introduced the report on the status of statistical development in Africa, set out in document E/ECA/COE/35/12-AU/STC/FMEPI/EXP/12(II), outlining the progress made to date, the challenges faced and measures taken to address those challenges in the future. To tackle the problems faced on the continent and respond adequately to the needs and aspirations of their citizens, African countries had adopted Agenda 2063 and joined the international community in adopting the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In order to track the progress made in implementation of those agendas, there was a need for quality statistical information that was comparable among countries, accessible and produced in a timely manner.

65. National accounts were important for their ability to assist with the definition, implementation and monitoring of a country's economic and social development policies. It was clear, however, that very few African countries used the 2008 version of the System of National Accounts. The African strategy on the implementation of the 2008 System of National Accounts would enable the African Union Commission, in collaboration with the Economic Commission for Africa, the African Development Bank and regional economic communities, to mobilize adequate financial and technical resources for the effective implementation of the 2008 System.

66. He noted that, in recent years, monitoring and evaluation of various programmes in Africa had failed because of the lack of reliable and continuous data. To overcome the deficit of available statistics, the report of the High-level Panel on the Post-2015 Development Agenda had called for a data revolution in the world and especially in Africa. The Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union had adopted two major decisions to strengthen the production of quality statistics in Africa, namely, the decision on the establishment of the Nelson Mandela pan-African statistics institute (to be based in Tunis) and the decision on the establishment of the pan-African training centre for statistics (to be based in Yamoussoukro). Those institutions would build on the progress already made, in particular in the following areas: civil registration and vital statistics, governance and peace and security statistics, national accounts and other emerging issues such as the data revolution. One of the major problems facing national statistical systems in Africa that hindered the production of quality statistics was the lack of adequate funding. At its most recent meeting, in March 2016, the Committee of Directors General of National Statistical Offices had recommended that the African States should allocate 0.015 per cent of their national budget to the development of statistics.

B. Discussion

67. In the ensuing discussion, experts agreed that statistics were fundamental for economic and social development. Statistics were needed for the implementation of Agenda 2063, and therefore member States should continue to advocate the development of statistics.

68. Civil registration was too centralized and was disconnected from local data. The majority of Africa's population lived in rural areas, and civil registry systems needed to include them. As most civil registration acts took place on

paper, digitization was a crucial step for preserving and better managing the data. Countries in post-conflict situations were in a particularly difficult position with regard to conducting population censuses. In 2006, the ministers of finance had asked that statisticians assist those countries with the conduct of their censuses.

69. Financing for the development of statistics was the most serious issue for the region. The proposed solutions that were being implemented by some member States included the establishment of national statistical funds and training centres. Countries needed to increase their funding of statistical institutions. All data users and beneficiaries, and not just statistical institutions, should be involved in mobilizing resources for statistical activities.

70. With regard to training, it was noted that the retention of graduate statisticians was a challenge for many countries. Pan-African institutions should provide funding for training schools and encourage Governments to recruit graduate statisticians systematically and make efforts to retain them. Experts discussed the work that had been done to operationalize the statistical training centre Côte d'Ivoire and the statistical institute in Tunisia and harness their potential for filling the gaps in training and in data harmonization in Africa. Training schools had a role to play in identifying new areas for data production, such as good governance, peace and security, urbanization and human settlements.

71. On the subject of statistics and poverty assessments, it was noted that statistics were important for poverty assessments. Africa needed to go beyond the numbers, and development planning and statistical data collection should be as participatory as possible. All data generated should be used in development planning by policymakers.

72. It was important to make use of technology and the data revolution to modernize statistics in Africa. The African Union should develop a legal framework to regulate statistics and support their harmonization in Africa as part of Agenda 2063. There was a serious risk of Africa being left behind if it did not embrace the data revolution, and it needed to identify and define the technology required.

73. With regard to ownership and sovereignty of data, preference should be given to national data rather than data produced by international institutions, which were often based on estimates. Countries needed to produce and own their national data. Where that was not possible, the estimates of international organizations could be useful.

74. Turning to economic statistics and national accounts, experts noted that there was no cooperation or adequate coordination between national statistical offices, government ministries and central banks. They also emphasized that an African statistical peer-review mechanism should be an important element of the African statistical institutional framework.

C. Recommendations

75. In the light of the discussion, the Joint Committee made the following recommendations:

(a) The African Union Commission, supported by the Economic Commission for Africa, the African Development Bank and the African Capacity-Building Foundation, should support African statistical training institutions in their efforts to train a sufficient number of statisticians and information technology experts to work in the national statistical systems;

(b) African Governments are encouraged to allocate at least 0.015 per cent of the national budget to support the activities implemented by the national statistical offices;

(c) The African Union Commission should coordinate the setting up of an African statistical fund that will be sourced from resource mobilization efforts by the African Union Commission, supported by the Economic Commission for Africa, the African Development Bank and the African Capacity-Building Foundation;

(d) The African Union Commission, the Economic Commission for Africa and the African Development Bank should develop a comprehensive coordination mechanism that will be implemented by African countries and regional economic communities with a view to better managing the production and use of national statistics at all levels;

(e) African Governments should continue to take the necessary steps in creating a conducive work environment that attracts and retains statisticians within their national statistical system;

(f) The African Union Commission, in collaboration with the Governments of Tunisia and Côte d'Ivoire, should take the necessary steps to ensure that the Nelson Mandela pan-African statistics institute and the pan-African training centre for statistics are operational by June 2016, as agreed by the Committee of Directors General of National Statistical Offices in March 2016;

(g) The African Union Commission, supported by the Economic Commission for Africa, the African Development Bank and the African Capacity-Building Foundation, should develop a strategy to promote innovation and the use of technology to improve the quality of statistics produced by the national statistical systems.

VIII. Statutory issues of the Economic Commission for Africa [agenda item 8]

A. Presentation

76. Representatives of the secretariat presented the following documents pertaining to the agenda item: the biennial report on the work of the Commission 2014-2015 (E/ECA/COE/35/9-AU/STC/FMEPI/EXP/9(II)) and the second annual survey of partners' opinions of the work of the Economic Commission for Africa; the Commission's strategic framework for 2018-2019 (E/ECA/COE/35/5-AU/STC/FMEPI/EXP/5(II)); the following reports of the Commission's subsidiary bodies: the progress report on the work of the African Institute for Economic Development and Planning (IDEP) (E/ECA/COE/35/7-AU/STC/FMEPI/EXP7(II)), the report of the first session of the Committee on Gender and Social Development (E/ECA/COE/35/16-AU/STC/FMEPI/EXP/16(II)), the report of the ninth session of the Committee on Regional Cooperation and Integration (E/ECA/COE/35/17-AU/STC/FMEPI/EXP/17(II)), the report of the ninth session of the Committee on Sustainable Development (E/ECA/COE/35/10-AU/STC/FMEPI/EXP/10(II)), and reports of the meetings of the intergovernmental committee of experts; and, lastly, the report on United Nations system-wide support to the African Union and its NEPAD programme (E/ECA/COE/35/6-AU/STC/FMEPI/EXP/6(II)).

77. In the presentation of the 2014-2015 biennial report, the representative of the secretariat emphasized the steps taken by the Commission over the past

biennium to transform itself into a think-tank of reference, to enhance its ability to influence priorities and programmes of key partners working on African development policy issues; to empower Africa to narrate its own narrative; and to drive Africa's structural transformation based on its own priorities. Those efforts pivoted around four strategic priorities, namely: achieving policy influence in support of Africa's transformation agenda; earning greater trust and credibility through the production of high-quality, evidence-based and good-fit policy research and knowledge delivery services; enhancing accountability mechanisms and deepening learning culture across all streams of work; and strengthening operational effectiveness. Key achievements were outlined across the nine subprogrammes of the 2014-2015 programme budget, providing evidence of targets achieved in respect of policy influence, credibility of the Commission's knowledge generation and delivery interventions, accountability and learning, and operational effectiveness.

78. An account was provided on follow-up actions on all the decisions and resolutions of the Conference of Ministers at its eight joint meetings, in 2015, including the work done by the Economic Commission for Africa to support the African Union Commission in the integration of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; to support the consultations with 27 African countries in mainstreaming Agenda 2063 in national strategic and development plans; to develop harmonized monitoring and evaluation and reporting frameworks; and to assist member States in coordinating regional consultations prior to major global and regional forums on such issues as financing for development, climate change, sustainable development and the data revolution.

79. Concluding her presentation of the activities of the Economic Commission for Africa, she noted that the conclusions of the second annual survey of partners' opinions of the Commission's work had generally been positive, indicating that the Commission was a reliable partner with extensive knowledge and experience on Africa's developmental issues. The survey had also indicated that the Commission's business plan was well placed to address the transformative agenda of the continent; that it was effectively developing partnerships around substantive initiatives in research and knowledge delivery; that its knowledge delivery was highly sensitive to context, and relevant; and that its policy engagement was consistently of high quality. Survey respondents had also suggested some areas for improvement, including the need to improve communication and increase visibility; to deepen partnerships with civil society organizations and the private sector; to improve capacities through national partnerships, and to strengthen planning and reporting on extrabudgetary funds.

80. Turning to the Commission's strategic framework for 2018-2019, she stressed that it both built on the successes and lessons learned from the previous biennium and addressed new priorities, such as Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, financing for development, climate change and migration. Under the strategic framework, the Commission's work was arranged around nine interdependent and complementary subprogrammes.

81. Introducing the progress report on the work of IDEP, the representative of the secretariat stressed that, as the training arm of the Economic Commission for Africa, the IDEP programme was consistent with and underpinned by Africa's priorities, including sustainable development, financing for development, the green economy, intra-African trade, and migration for development. Also highlighted was the importance of capacity development, in the particular context of the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063. Various activities were outlined including high-level policy dialogues, seminars, master's degree programmes and short courses offered by IDEP in English, French and Arabic, some of which had been tailor-made to address

specific requests by countries while others were delivered in collaboration with various partners. The Institute's e-learning programme was scheduled to be launched in 2016. In 2015, IDEP had delivered 24 courses in various African countries which had benefited 589 African public officials, 33 per cent of whom were women. IDEP had also launched a master's degree programme in industrial policy in collaboration with the University of Johannesburg. The need to enhance both human capacity and financial resources in the light of increasing demand for the Institute's services by member States was highlighted, and member States were urged to pay their annual assessed contributions regularly and, where applicable, to settle their arrears.

82. Subsequently, during the presentations under the same item, the representative of the secretariat said that nominations for membership of the Institute's Governing Council had been sought from the five African subregions and revisions to the statute of IDEP had been proposed by the Governing Council at its fifty-third and fifty-fourth meetings. Those nominations, once finalized, and the draft revised statute would be submitted for endorsement by the Conference of Ministers at its current joint meetings.

83. Introducing the report of the first session of the Committee on Gender and Social Development, the representative of the secretariat noted that the Committee had been formed through a merger of the Committee on Women in Development under subprogramme 6 and the Committee on Human and Social Development under subprogramme 9. The mandate of the new committee was to provide expert guidance to the Economic Commission for Africa in its work on gender and social development, in such areas as gender equality and women's empowerment; population and youth; employment and social protection; and urbanization. It was also concerned in particular with the indices developed by the Commission, namely, the African gender and development index and the African social development index.

84. The report of the ninth session of the Committee on Regional Cooperation and Integration, on the theme "Enhancing productive integration for Africa's transformation", reviewed progress in the following areas: measuring and monitoring progress of integration; international and intra-African trade performance; status of food security in Africa; development and promotion of regional strategic food and agricultural commodity value chains; and infrastructure development in Africa. The Committee had adopted recommendations on such issues as the need for human capital development to optimize innovation; the slow integration process in Central Africa; the guiding principle of the African Union Commission on large-scale land-based investment, including the target of 30 per cent of documented land to be owned by women by 2025; and balance between improving agricultural productivity and the environment.

85. Regarding the report of the ninth session of the Committee on Sustainable Development, the representative of the secretariat reviewed the Committee's recommendations in such areas as small island developing States, new technology and innovation, green economy and natural resources, mineral resources development, climate change and development and the composition of its bureau. Those recommendations would be taken up by the African Regional Forum on Sustainable Development at its meeting in May 2016. Drawing attention to the programme on innovations technology and management of Africa's natural resources, she explained that the programme was concerned with moving towards a low carbon trajectory and that work was under way on a new formula for the alignment of growth and development. She stressed also the importance of implementing the post-2015 strategy of the World Summit on the Information Society, which would contribute to achieving the targets of the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063.

86. Introducing the reports of the meetings of the intergovernmental committees of experts, the representative of the secretariat explained that the five subregional offices of the Economic Commission for Africa had held their respective annual sessions in February and March 2016 and had agreed on a range of recommendations under three categories, namely: recommendations relevant to Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals; recommendations related to the Commission's country profiles; and recommendations on the review of the intergovernmental committees of experts and other subsidiary organs of the Commission. During the meetings, experts had also deliberated on the macroeconomic environment in the various subregions, the country profiles and statutory issues pertaining to their work programmes. An important agenda item had been the reform of the architecture of the intergovernmental committees with regard to the periodicity of meetings, the agendas and their link to the Conference of Ministers. A majority of the member States agreed that the Economic Commission for Africa should proceed with the reform, with a view to ensuring better alignment and coherence with the Conference of Ministers and the other statutory organs.

87. Introducing the report on United Nations support for the African Union and its NEPAD programme, the representative of the secretariat highlighted several areas where the Economic Commission for Africa had provided such support, including the harmonization of policy, legal and regulatory frameworks to enhance private sector engagement in financing transboundary infrastructure projects in Africa; contribution to the articulation of Agenda 2063; the development of the United Nations-African Union partnership on Africa's integration and development agenda for 2017-2027; global advocacy to enhance domestic resource mobilization; and negotiations on the continental free trade area. Highlighting the role of the Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa in the provision of such United Nations support, she said that the Economic Commission for Africa had also provided technical support both to NEPAD and, together with the United Nations Development Programme, to the African Peer Review Mechanism. In that context, she observed that the Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa was facing severe financial and human resource constraints, given its lack of a specific budget and the small size of its staff, and challenges relating to inadequate communication and the lack of regular intra-cluster and inter-cluster cooperation. Accordingly, the availability of sustainable resources was indispensable to the effective operation of the Mechanism.

B. Discussion

88. The ensuing discussion revolved around issues related to human capital development, financial infrastructure, the incorporation of global and continental development programmes at the national level, constraints to regional integration, and contract negotiations relating to Africa's natural resources.

89. Experts underscored the need for the Economic Commission for Africa to pay more attention to human and financial infrastructure in its 2018-2019 strategic framework, indicating that the Commission's work in those areas had not been sufficiently evidenced in its 2014-2015 biennial report. A stronger emphasis should be placed on human capital development and resource mobilization in the design of its reforms, policies and training. Noting the initiatives relating to human and financial infrastructure, experts confirmed that those issues had been well captured in the three pillars – economic, social and environmental – that formed the basis of the 2018-2019 framework, and reviewed examples of the Commission's work on human capital, including the African social development index, the African gender and development index,

and its work on skills and employment. They also noted that the primary mandate of IDEP was to support the development of human capacity on the continent through training in a broad range of priority areas.

90. Underlining the importance of integrating Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in their national development plans, experts stressed the need for support to that end. It was noted that the Economic Commission for Africa provided tailored capacity-building support to member States through the courses provided by IDEP in development planning and the structural transformation of African countries. The commission also provided tailored advisory services to member States upon request. In addition, the Commission was producing country profiles which provided a holistic picture of the social and economic development of member States; the various indices could also be used to develop, implement, monitor and evaluate national plans and policies.

91. The slow pace of regional integration in Central Africa was attributed to such factors as the similarities of the products of countries in the subregion, the concentration on primary commodities, and the lack of a regional policy on industrialization. Regional integration was also impeded by such factors as poor transport infrastructure, the lack of reliable data and the failure to underpin countries' trade policy with an analysis of trade patterns in the subregion. Accelerating the pace of regional integration in Central Africa would therefore require a comprehensive approach with macroeconomic, trade and infrastructure dimensions. It was also argued that, while important, a monitoring and evaluation framework should not be the only requirement for accelerating regional integration.

92. Regarding the management of Africa's natural resources, experts highlighted the problems of contract negotiations and illicit financial flows in the extractive industries, drew attention to the work in that regard of the High-level Panel on Illicit Financial Flows from Africa and also noted the courses offered by IDEP in that domain. Noting the problems experienced by countries with mining industries, experts sought support from the African Union in the training of engineers and development of mining codes. The Economic Commission for Africa was working with African countries on the negotiation of contracts and had raised the awareness of countries on issues related to governance in the mining sector.

93. Following questions relating to the modalities of member States' participation in the IDEP Governing Council, various clarifications were provided, including that initial consultations had been held by the Bureau of the 2015 Conference of Ministers, which had been responsible for coordinating the nomination process with representatives of the five subregions; that membership of the council was voluntary for individual member States; and that only two countries for each subregion could serve on the council at any point in time. Experts were informed on the state of the nominations thus far: Central Africa had nominated Gabon and Equatorial Guinea; East Africa had nominated Kenya and Uganda; North Africa had nominated Morocco and the Sudan; Southern Africa had nominated Lesotho and Zambia; and West Africa had nominated Ghana, with one country still to be nominated.

94. The experts commended the Commission on the achievements of the 2014-2015 biennium and the elaboration of the 2018-2019 strategic framework, which they duly endorsed.

C. Recommendations

95. In the light of the discussion, the Joint Committee made the following recommendations:

(a) The Economic Commission for Africa, in collaboration with the African Union Commission, should develop and make available to member States a framework for the mainstreaming of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development into national development plans, taking into consideration the experiences and lessons learned in this area, and should provide technical assistance for implementation;

(b) The Economic Commission for Africa, in collaboration with the African Union Commission, should use the integrated results framework as the basis for producing an annual Sustainable Development Goals report to track progress on Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development, which will be accompanied with information on the status of the data ecosystem;

(c) Member States and the regional economic communities should adopt a comprehensive approach to accelerating regional integration, with macroeconomic, trade and infrastructure dimensions, among others;

(d) The African Regional Forum on Sustainable Development, supported by the Economic Commission for Africa, the African Union Commission and the relevant United Nations funds and programmes, should foster the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development (social, economic and environmental) and promote coordination and coherence, learning and sharing of best practice within the United Nations development system, and with other regional and subregional forums and organizations;

(e) The Economic Commission for Africa, in collaboration with the African Union Commission, should enhance the production of migration-related data and undertake studies using the latest data to determine the nature and patterns of international migration streams in Africa, assess the impact of skilled migration both for countries of origin and destination, the long-term implications of remittance flows for development, and assist member States to integrate and mainstream migration into national development plans and strategies;

(f) The Economic Commission for Africa should take all necessary steps to organize on an annual basis an African regional review of progress in the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society in support of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063;

(g) The Economic Commission for Africa, in collaboration with the African Union Commission, should assist member States in managing their natural resources by supporting the training of engineers, the development of mining codes and the strengthening of contract negotiation capacities;

(h) The Conference of Ministers, at its ninth Joint Annual Meetings, should endorse the draft revised statute of IDEP;

(i) The Economic Commission for Africa should scale up its work on human development and resource mobilization for the implementation of development programmes.

IX. Statutory issues of the African Union [agenda item 9]

A. Presentations

96. Representatives of the secretariat presented the statutory issues of the African Union. The first presentation was on the joint African Union

Commission-Association of African Central Banks strategy on the establishment of the African central bank, as set out in E/ECA/COE/35/13 AU/STC/FMEPI/EXP/13(II). The representative of the secretariat explained that the strategy proposed an approach to establishing an African central bank based on meeting preconditions at the regional level in order to create a strong and sustainable continental economic and monetary union. He summarized the proposed road map and recommendations set out in the strategy.

97. Presenting the Accra Declaration of the Fourth Congress of African Economists, as set out in document E/ECA/COE/35/14-AU/STC/FMEPI/EXP/14(II), the representative of the secretariat stressed that the theme of the Congress, “Industrial policy and economic performance in Africa”, was in line with the aspirations of Agenda 2063. The Congress provided an invaluable platform for young African economists in the continent and the diaspora, enabling them to harness their potential and strengthen their capacity through discussions with African economists and policymakers. The main objective was to promote economic research among African economists in order to equip the continent with the needed research capacities for its structural transformation. Participants in the Congress had recommended that Africa should follow an industrial path that was environmentally sustainable by gradually transitioning to green growth.

98. Presenting the draft statute of the African Institute for Remittances, the representative of the secretariat explained that the statute defined the objectives, functions and activities, governance and management, and operations of the Institute. The Government of Kenya (the host country) and the European Commission, together with other development partners, were already providing financial assistance for the Institute.

99. Regarding the draft pan-African investment code, as set out in document E/ECA/COE/35/18-AU/STC/FMEPI/EXP/18(II), the representative of the secretariat recalled that, at its third meeting, held in Abidjan on 22 and 23 May 2008, the Conference of African Ministers of Integration had requested the African Union Commission to develop a comprehensive investment code for Africa with a view to promoting private sector participation. National, regional and continental dimensions had been taken into account in order to create a legal environment conducive to promoting the flow of investments in Africa, facilitating intra-African trade and promoting cross-border investment. Several consultative meetings had been held with experts from African Union member States, but a decision had not yet been reached on whether the code should supersede national investment laws.

100. Introducing the draft concept note on the creation of the African inclusive markets centre of excellence, as set out in document E/ECA/COE/35/19-AU/STC/FMEPI/EXP/19(II), the representative of the secretariat stressed the need for African countries to promote regional economic integration, in particular through transformative regional value chains, inclusive markets and business development, which would generate employment and income and reduce poverty in Africa. He noted that, in order to reconcile strong growth with poverty and inequality reduction, the markets in which the poor and vulnerable interact must be made more inclusive. Inclusive markets were defined as markets that resulted in expanded choice and opportunity for the poor and produced outcomes that benefited the poor. The expected outcome for the work of the centre was to enhance the capacity of the African Union and its relevant institutions to support economic transformation in Africa through inclusive markets.

101. Presenting the report of the annual meeting of the Directors General of National Statistical Offices of African countries, held in Libreville from 26 to 28 November 2015 on the theme of the data revolution, the Sustainable

Development Goals and Agenda 2063, the representative of the secretariat explained that the main objectives of the meeting had been to examine the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063, to take stock of the specialized technical groups of the strategy for the harmonization of statistics in Africa, to exchange experiences and best practices and to discuss arrangements for the coordination of ongoing activities.

102. Presenting the report of the seventh meeting of the African Union Subcommittee of Directors General of Customs, held in Kinshasa on 24 and 25 September 2015, the representative of the secretariat recalled that the meeting had considered the implementation of the single window concept in Africa, coordinated border management, interconnected customs clearance systems and an African Union customs trade facilitation forum, all of which could be used to facilitate legitimate trade, protect society and collect government revenues and statistics.

103. On the issue of financing social protection in Africa, the representative of the secretariat stressed the importance of State-financed social protection measures for vulnerable groups and as a means of addressing social inequalities in Africa. Those measures, such as cash transfers, access to health care and education, employment, public works programmes and feeding schemes, would help to achieve the social protection and social security targets of the first 10-year implementation plan of Agenda 2063.

104. On the issue of women's rights and economic empowerment, the representative of the secretariat described the role of capital markets in mobilizing domestic resources for Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals through women's leadership. Such markets should be simplified and could tap into local women's credit schemes. It was necessary to have gender-inclusive macroeconomic policy frameworks, gender-sensitive programmes, inclusive and equitable outcomes and gender-sensitive targets and indicators for monitoring and evaluation. To achieve Agenda 2063 and meet the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030, small-scale income generation initiatives should evolve into the creation of opportunities for women.

105. The Secretary General of the Pan-African Postal Union presented, on behalf of the African Union Commission, the report on the elaboration of guidelines on addressing and postcode systems in Africa and the report of the project on the electrification and connectivity of post offices in rural areas of Africa, a joint project of the African Union Commission, the Pan-African Postal Union and the Universal Postal Union.

B. Discussion

106. In the ensuing discussion of the statutory issues presented by the African Union Commission, experts raised concerns about the slow ratification of the legal instruments establishing the pan-African financial institutions, namely, an African central bank, an African investment bank and an African monetary fund. Those institutions would catalyse the development potential of member States by providing domestic resources. In addition, flexibility within the macroeconomic convergence criteria would be necessary to help countries to move forward in monetary integration. Experts agreed that countries that were ready to move forward in the establishment of the African financial institutions should be allowed to do so.

107. Experts drew attention to the contribution of the agricultural sector in boosting Africa's economic and structural transformation. The priorities for reaching green growth included building resilience to climate shocks, providing sustainable infrastructure, creating ecosystem services and making

efficient and sustainable use of natural resources (particularly water). Experts also discussed the communication strategy of the Congress with a view to ensuring greater involvement of young African economists through their respective research institutions.

108. Regarding the draft statute of the African Institute for Remittances, experts raised concerns that member States had not been given adequate time to study and review the draft statute and its legal and financial implications thoroughly and to provide meaningful inputs. On the issue of financial commitment, it was clarified that the Institute had already been established as a specialized technical office of the African Union Commission and would be treated as any other organ of the African Union. Experts requested additional time for further review of the draft statute.

109. Experts commended the African Union Commission on its efforts to promote investment in Africa through initiatives such as the draft pan-African investment code, which was designed to promote investment, create jobs and ensure poverty eradication. Participants discussed the six options recommended by the legal experts at their meeting in Lusaka, from 30 November to 2 December 2015, and voiced the need for the Conference of Ministers to decide on the legal nature of the code.

110. Experts congratulated the African Union Commission on its initiative to create an African inclusive markets centre of excellence, which would support inclusive growth and contribute to poverty eradication in Africa. They noted the need to take into account the goals of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and, in that context, to include aspects of the green economy and its potential for job creation. They also observed that it was important to rationalize the creation of new institutions and centres in order to avoid duplication of efforts.

111. Experts underscored the importance of accurate statistics for Africa's development and structural transformation and considered progress concerning the planned Nelson Mandela pan-African statistics institute and the pan-African training centre for statistics, the African charter on statistics, and other efforts to optimize the data revolution in such areas as national accounts, the labour market, statistics on governance for peace and security, education, science, technology and innovation and the 2020 censuses on population and housing.

112. Experts emphasized the need for a recommendation on adequate infrastructure and appropriate technology to support coordinated border management in Africa.

113. Experts stressed the importance of the development of guarantees to facilitate the access and reimbursement of credit for vulnerable groups, including women.

114. Experts discussed the advantages of comprehensive addressing and postcode systems for social and economic development, emphasizing that, in principle, each member State was capable of implementing its own systems.

C. Recommendations

115. In the light of the discussion, the Joint Committee made the following recommendations:

(a) The joint strategy on the establishment of the African central bank should be submitted for adoption by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union at its twenty-seventh ordinary session, to be held in Kigali in July 2016, taking into consideration the reservations expressed

by the subregional committee for Southern Africa of the Association of African Central Banks;

(b) The African Union Commission, supported by the African Capacity-Building Foundation and African economic research centres, should work together to produce a publication on the dynamics of African economies, based on an African perception of African development challenges and opportunities;

(c) The African Union Commission, in collaboration with the regional economic communities and the African Capacity-Building Foundation, should establish an African forum for think tanks to address Africa's development;

(d) The African Union member States should review the draft statute of the African Institute for Remittances and submit their comments to the African Union Commission in writing within four months;

(e) The African Union Commission should submit the amended version of the statute to the legal experts of the African Union for their review before submitting it for consideration and adoption by the relevant organs of the African Union;

(f) The African Union Commission should proceed with deeper consultations with member States, with a view to finalizing the draft pan-African investment code;

(g) The African Union Commission should commission an independent consultant to carry out a feasibility study, to consider various options for making the African inclusive markets centre of excellence operational and financially sustainable, and the findings of that study should then be presented to member States for due consideration;

(h) National and regional stakeholders and international partners should develop policies and strategies incorporating the social protection and social security targets of the first 10-year implementation plan for Agenda 2063;

(i) The African Union Commission should conduct a study on women's cash flow and access to credit; best practices should be scaled up to improve women's access to credit; and disaggregated targeting should be used that includes, in particular, women at the grass-roots level;

(j) Member States are urged to prioritize the addressing and post code systems and to include them in their national development plans as part of the infrastructure needed to increase access to basic services.

X. Date and theme of the tenth Joint Annual Meetings

[agenda item 10]

116. The representative of the secretariat introduced the note on the dates and theme for the tenth Joint Annual Meetings in 2017 (E/ECA/COE/35/21-AU/STC/FMEPI/EXP/21(II)). He said that the suggested themes had been formulated by the African Union Commission and the Economic Commission for Africa through a consultative process and were now being submitted to the Committee for its consideration.

117. In the ensuing discussion, some experts maintained that the theme of "Growth, inequality and unemployment" could, with certain modifications, be made to encompass the other two themes. Following further discussion of the themes suggested by the secretariat, the Joint Committee identified the following themes for further deliberation:

- (a) Wealth creation, equitable growth and employment for sustainable development;
- (b) African economies: from high growth to inclusive growth;
- (c) Growth, inequality and unemployment;
- (d) Export-led growth: challenges and opportunities.

118. Noting the convergence of the proposed themes, the Chair invited the experts to seek agreement on one of them. The Joint Committee agreed to request the secretariat to work closely with the Bureau with a view to finalizing, as appropriate, the wording of the proposed theme and to inform the Committee accordingly.

119. On the issue of possible dates for the tenth Joint Annual Meetings in 2017, the Joint Committee unanimously supported the proposed time frame of mid-March 2017.

XI. Other matters [agenda item 11]

120. No other matters were raised.

XII. Consideration and adoption of the draft report of the meeting of the Joint Committee of Experts and consideration and recommendation for adoption of the draft resolutions [agenda item 12]

121. Under this agenda item, the Committee considered the draft report of its meeting together with the 17 resolutions for consideration and adoption by the ninth Joint Annual Meetings of the African Union Specialized Technical Committee on Finance, Monetary Affairs, Economic Planning and Integration and the Economic Commission for Africa Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, as contained in document E/ECA/COE/35/L, AU/STC/FMEPI /EXP/Draft/Rpt(I). Several experts made comments and proposed amendments to the report and to the draft resolutions. After extensive discussion, the Committee unanimously adopted the report. The resolutions, as amended by the Joint Committee, are attached to the present report for consideration and adoption by the Conference of Ministers.

XIII. Closing of the meeting [agenda item 13]

122. Closing remarks were made by Mr. Maruping, Mr. Hamdok and Mr. Risenga Maluleke, Chair of the Bureau. Mr. Maruping welcomed the consensus reached by the delegates on an integrated and coherent approach to the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals and on a single periodic progress report on both agendas, and the guidance provided by the experts for future work by the African Union Commission, the Economic Commission for Africa and partners. Mr. Hamdok said that the lessons learnt from implementing the Millennium Development Goals would be instrumental in guiding Africa into developing a single reporting framework for Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda. Mr. Maluleke strongly encouraged participants to seek a collective approach in resolving the challenges of Africa's development through the implementation of Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals.

123. Following those statements and the customary exchange of courtesies, the Chair declared the meeting closed.

Annex

Resolutions

I. Joint resolution of the African Union Commission and the Economic Commission for Africa

937(XLIX). Mainstreaming the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063 into national strategic frameworks, actions plans and programmes

The Conference of Ministers,

Welcoming with deep appreciation the adoption by the African Union Assembly in January 2015 of Agenda 2063,

Welcoming the adoption by the General Assembly in September 2015 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the call for its full and effective implementation,

Mindful of the challenges associated with the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals, and aware that the implementation of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development will pose even greater challenges for member States owing to the larger number of goals, targets and indicators involved and the focus on multidimensional sustainability, including related global challenges of technology, financing and statistics,

Taking note of the convergence of the two agendas and the need to ensure coherence and build synergies between them,

Concerned about the limited financial and human resources for implementing and monitoring development plans, in particular given the resource constraints already experienced by the national statistical offices,

Aware that the core set of continental indicators should be derived from the indicators in the 10-year implementation plan for Agenda 2063 and the global set of indicators in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, taking into account the commonalities and variations that exist between the two agendas,

1. *Calls upon* the African Union Commission, supported by the Economic Commission for Africa, the African Development Bank, regional economic communities and the Planning and Coordinating Agency of the New Partnership for Africa's Development to create awareness among member States about the importance of a coherent and integrated approach to the implementation of and follow-up to Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;

2. *Requests* the Economic Commission for Africa, the African Union Commission and the African Development Bank to work together to establish composite indicators to facilitate the strategic monitoring of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;

3. *Requests* the African Union Commission, supported by the Economic Commission for Africa, the African Development Bank, regional economic communities and the Planning and Coordinating Agency of the New Partnership for Africa's Development to foster the incorporation of both agendas into national strategic frameworks;

4. *Requests* the Economic Commission for Africa, the African Union Commission and the African Development Bank to develop an integrated monitoring and evaluation framework that will inform a single annual progress report on the implementation of both agendas;

5. *Requests* the Economic Commission for Africa and the African Union Commission to call upon the Secretary-General of the United Nations to establish expeditiously the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data under United Nations intergovernmental processes, consistent with principle-based partnerships and as provided for in the Secretary-General's Synthesis Report entitled "The Road to Dignity by 2030";

6. *Requests* member States to take the necessary measures to incorporate the goals, targets and indicators of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;

7. *Requests* member States to take the necessary steps to integrate Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goal indicators into their national development plans.

II. Resolutions of the Economic Commission for Africa

938(XLIX). Integrated reporting and follow-up on sustainable development

The Conference of Ministers,

Recalling that, since 2005, the progress reports on the Millennium Development Goals in Africa have provided a rigorous assessment of Africa's progress in achieving the Goals and served as a basis for policy discussion, peer learning and advocacy,

Noting that the reports have also provided the impetus for strong and coordinated action by Africa's top decision-makers to accelerate progress towards attainment of the Millennium Development Goals,

Acknowledging that the reports were jointly produced by the Economic Commission for Africa, the African Union Commission, the African Development Bank and the United Nations Development Programme pursuant to the mandate conferred by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union at its fourth ordinary session, in January 2005,

Recalling the commitments made by member States in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development,

Reaffirming that the transition to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the adoption of Agenda 2063 call for a renewed mandate for integrated reporting on both agendas by the partner institutions,

Noting that, beyond tracking progress on the Sustainable Development Goals, it is important to develop a single platform to discuss gaps, opportunities and lessons learned in implementation and to propose measures for corrective action,

Recalling that, in the outcome document of the 2015 United Nations summit for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda, entitled "Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development",¹ the Heads of State and Government and high representatives undertook to provide

¹ General Assembly resolution 70/1 of 25 September 2015.

systematic follow-up and review at the various levels, as set out in the 2030 Agenda and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, and emphasized that quality, accessible, timely and reliable disaggregated data would be needed to help with the measurement of progress and to ensure that no one was left behind,²

Recognizing the need for follow-up on both Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,

1. *Requests* the Economic Commission for Africa, the African Union Commission and the African Development Bank to use the integrated results framework as the basis for producing an annual report on progress in the implementation of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which will be supported with information on the status of the data system on the continent;

2. *Calls upon* the Economic Commission for Africa, in collaboration with the African Development Bank and other partners, to take all necessary steps, in the context of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, to designate the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development as the platform for the review of progress on and follow-up to Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; to align the consultations of the Africa Regional Forum with the annual reporting cycle of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda; and to enlarge the mandate of the Africa Regional Forum to include a review of progress, challenges and gaps in meeting the commitments outlined in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda;

3. *Calls upon* member States to formulate strategies to enhance domestic resource mobilization, as called for by the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, including by stepping up efforts to combat illicit financial flows and to strengthen tax administration and by adopting policies to generate additional resources and to combat corruption in all its forms.

939(XLIX). Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development

The Conference of Ministers,

Reaffirming the commitments on sustainable development made by African countries at major United Nations conferences and summits on economic, social and environmental development, in the outcomes of their review conferences, and in declarations and decisions adopted by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union,

Welcoming General Assembly resolution 70/1 of 25 September 2015, in which the Assembly recognized the importance of building on existing follow-up and review mechanisms at the regional level, encouraged all Member States to identify the most suitable regional forum in which to engage, and encouraged the regional commissions to continue supporting Member States in this regard,

Recalling General Assembly resolution 67/290 of 9 July 2013, in which the Assembly formally established the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development to replace the Commission on Sustainable Development, invited the regional commissions to contribute to the work of the Forum, and decided that the Forum, under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council, should conduct regular reviews, starting in 2016, on the follow-up to and implementation of sustainable development commitments and objectives,

² Ibid, paras. 47 and 48.

Acknowledging that the Addis Ababa Action Agenda comprises a comprehensive set of policy actions by member States, with tangible measures to finance sustainable development, transform the global economy and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals,

Recalling its resolution 930 (XLVIII), in which it invited the Economic Commission for Africa, in collaboration with the African Union Commission and other partners, to take all necessary steps to convene the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development,

Acknowledging the need to align the biennial consultations of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development with the annual meetings of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development,

1. *Requests* the Economic Commission for Africa, in collaboration with the African Union Commission and other partners, to convene on an annual basis the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development for follow-up to and review of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;

2. *Urges* the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development, supported by the Economic Commission for Africa, the African Union Commission and the relevant United Nations funds and programmes, to foster the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development;

3. *Decides* that the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development will build on existing platforms, avoiding the creation of additional administrative structures, and will promote coordination and coherence, learning and the sharing of best practices within the United Nations development system, and with other regional and subregional forums and organizations;

4. *Also decides* that reviews of the implementation of all regional outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits should be sequenced and synchronized with the work of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development, to ensure that such reviews contribute to the assessment of the regional implementation of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;

5. *Encourages* member States to participate in the Africa Regional Forum for Sustainable Development scheduled to take place from 18 to 20 May 2016, proposed to be held in Cairo, and the High-level Forum on Sustainable Development scheduled to take place from 11 to 20 July 2016, in New York.

940(XLIX). International migration in Africa

The Conference of Ministers,

Mindful that the key role of migration in promoting development has been recognized in Agenda 2063 and in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,

Recalling decision EX.CL/Dec.305 (IX), adopted by the African Union Executive Council at its ninth ordinary session, held in Banjul in June 2006, in which the Executive Council endorsed the Migration Policy Framework for Africa,

Acknowledging decision Assembly/AU/20 (XXIV), adopted by the African Union Assembly on the joint programme of the Economic Commission for Africa, the African Union, the International Labour Organization and the International Organization for Migration on labour migration,

Acknowledging also the Declaration on Migration,³ adopted by the Assembly of the African Union at its twenty-fifth ordinary session on 15 June 2015, in which the Heads of State and Government of the African Union undertook to expedite the introduction of an African passport and the abolishment of visa requirements for all African citizens in all African countries, to encourage the free movement of people, capital, goods and services across the continent,

Recalling the Second High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development, held in New York on 3 and 4 October 2013, which provided a useful opportunity to address constructively the issue of international migration and development and explore the opportunities and challenges that international migration presents, including the protection of the human rights of migrants and the contribution of migrants to development,

Recognizing the need for African member States to work together to develop a common African narrative that highlights the positive benefits of migration for comprehensive economic growth and human development in Africa and eliminates misleading stereotypes and perceptions of migration and migrants,

Recognizing also the need to update the Migration Policy Framework for Africa developed 10 years ago with stronger empirical research and analyses that respond more effectively to the current situation of migration on the continent,

Appreciating the importance of cooperation at the national, regional and international levels to ensure safe, orderly and regular migration with respect for human rights and humane treatment of migrants, regardless of their origin and status,

1. *Requests* the African Union Commission and the Economic Commission for Africa to enhance the production of migration-related data;

2. *Also request* the African Union Commission and the Economic Commission for Africa to undertake studies using the latest available data to determine the nature and patterns of international migration streams in Africa, assess the impact of irregular migration, in particular in transit countries, and the impact on border communities, assess skilled migration both for countries of origin and of destination and the long-term implications of remittance flows for development;

3. *Further requests* the African Union Commission and the Economic Commission for Africa to establish a high-level panel on international migration in Africa, to provide overall guidance and support to policy dialogues on an African perspective on international migration in Africa;

4. *Calls upon* the Economic Commission for Africa and the African Union Commission to provide the necessary technical backstopping to the high-level panel and to report on the progress made on the actions identified above to the Conference of Ministers at its next joint meetings;

5. *Requests* all development partners, in particular the relevant organizations of the United Nations development system and the regional economic communities, to support member States, the African Union Commission and the Economic Commission for Africa in their implementation of the actions identified above.

6. *Further calls upon* the African Union Commission and the Economic Commission for Africa to develop a continental strategy to address

³ Assembly/AU/Decl.6 (XXV).

the issue of irregular migration in collaboration with the international community and in the framework of shared responsibilities.

941(XLIX). Organization of an annual African regional review of progress in the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on Information Society

The Conference of Ministers,

Recalling General Assembly resolution 56/183 of 21 December 2001, in which the Assembly welcomed the resolution adopted by the Council of the International Telecommunication Union at its 2001 session, endorsing the proposal of the Secretary-General of the International Telecommunication Union to hold the World Summit on the Information Society at the highest possible level in two phases,

Recalling also the Tunis Commitment and the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society, in which the World Summit on the Information Society called on the General Assembly to undertake in 2015 an overall review of the implementation of the outcomes of the Summit,

Recalling further General Assembly resolutions 68/198 of 20 December 2013 and 68/302 of 31 July 2014, in which the Assembly set out the modalities for undertaking the overall World Summit on the Information Society,

Reaffirming the potential of information and communications technology as a powerful tool to foster socioeconomic and environmental development, in particular in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,

Acknowledging with appreciation that the Economic Commission for Africa organized a regional 10-year review of the World Summit on the Information Society, held in Addis Ababa in 2015, with the participation of member States and regional organizations,

1. *Welcomes* the adoption by the General Assembly of the outcome document of the 10-year review of the World Summit on the Information Society, which included a commitment to the vision of the Summit to build a people-centred, inclusive and development-oriented information society;

2. *Notes* that the overall review of the General Assembly of the World Summit on the Information Society has strengthened the role of the regional commissions, and that the outcome document of the high-level meeting of the Assembly on the overall review of the implementation of the outcomes of the Summit⁴ included a call for the continuation of the work of the United Nations Group on the Information Society in coordinating the work of United Nations agencies, according to their mandates and competencies, and an invitation for the regional commissions to continue their work in the implementation of the action lines of the World Summit and their contribution to the reviews thereof, including through regional reviews;

3. *Calls upon* the Economic Commission for Africa and other partners to take all necessary steps to organize on an annual basis an African regional review of progress in the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society in support of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063.

⁴ General Assembly resolution 70/125 of 16 December 2015.

942(XLIX). African Institute for Economic Development and Planning

The Conference of Ministers,

Recalling Economic and Social Council resolution 2013/2 of 5 July 2013, by which the Council endorsed the updated statute of the African Institute for Economic Development and Planning, on the recommendation of the Economic Commission for Africa, as set out in Commission resolution 908 (XLVI) of 26 March 2013,

Recalling also article IV, paragraph 3, of the updated statute of the African Institute for Economic Development and Planning, by which the Conference of Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development is required to appoint the 10 members of the Governing Council of the Institute who will serve as representatives of African Governments,

Taking note of the progress report on the work of the African Institute for Economic Development and Planning,

Taking note also of the recommendations of the Governing Council of the African Institute for Economic Development and Planning at its fifty-third and fifty-fourth meetings, held in February 2015 and February 2016, respectively, calling for the revision of the statute of the Institute,

Taking note further of the renewal of the Governing Council of the African Institute for Economic Development and Planning, as recommended by the Council at its fifty-fourth meeting,

Recognizing the central role of planning in meeting Africa's development priorities, in particular in support of the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063,

Acknowledging the critical role that an adequate capacity-building policy and programme will play in the achievement by member States of their development objectives,

Commending the Economic Commission for Africa on its continued support for the African Institute for Economic Development and Planning,

Concerned that the current level of financial support from member States, through payment of annual assessed contributions to the African Institute for Economic Development and Planning, is low and that the Institute is thus limited in its ability to sustain its support to member States through capacity-building,

1. *Recommends* that the Governing Council further considers the revised statute of the African Institute for Economic Development and Planning, based on the approved amendments;

2. *Recommends* that the Bureau of the 2016 Conference of Ministers to conduct consultations with member States, to secure nominations for and appoint members of the Governing Council of the African Institute for Economic Development and Planning, as early as is feasible, and preferably before 30 April 2016;

3. *Calls upon* member States to pay their annual assessed contributions to the African Institute for Economic Development and Planning regularly and to take steps towards the settlement of their arrears, where applicable;

4. *Calls upon* Economic Commission for Africa partners to support the capacity development activities of the African Institute for Economic Development and Planning;

5. *Calls upon* the Economic Commission for Africa to strengthen further its support for the African Institute for Economic Development and Planning.

943(XLIX). Proposed strategic framework and biennial programme plan of the Economic Commission for Africa for the biennium 2018-2019

The Conference of Ministers,

Recalling General Assembly resolution 41/203 of 11 December 1986 and all subsequent resolutions on programme planning,

Recalling also its resolution 844 (XXXIX) of 15 May 2006, in which it endorsed the repositioning of the Economic Commission for Africa to respond better to Africa's priorities, and its resolution 908 (XLVI) of 26 March 2013, in which it mandated the Economic Commission for Africa to establish its new strategic direction and programme structure,

Noting the unique role of the Economic Commission for Africa and its comprehensive mandate as the main economic and social development centre of the United Nations development system for the Africa region,

Noting also the importance of strengthening cooperation and creating synergies within the United Nations development system at the global, regional and country levels in the Africa region through enhanced collaboration between the secretariat and the funds, programmes, specialized agencies and other entities of the United Nations development system, and the need to build new partnerships within that system,

Recognizing the need for the Economic Commission for Africa to adapt and respond to the evolving development challenges and opportunities for the Africa region in the light of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development,

Underlining that the effectiveness and efficiency of the intergovernmental structure of the Economic Commission for Africa benefits from enhanced transparency, engagement and communication between member States and the secretariat, and with other stakeholders, in accordance with its rules of procedure,

Taking note with appreciation of the Economic Commission for Africa programme performance report for the biennium 2014-2015,⁵ in which the Commission highlighted the significant results achieved in all its programme areas, namely, knowledge generation, sharing and networking, advocacy and consensus-building and advisory services and technical cooperation,

Noting with appreciation the continued efforts of the Economic Commission for Africa to secure additional resources to supplement its regular budget with a view to enabling it to deepen its work in identified priority areas and giving it the flexibility to respond adequately to emerging issues that cannot be covered by the regular programme of work,

Encouraging the Economic Commission for Africa to continue its support for member States, the African Union Commission and its New Partnership for Africa's Development programme and the regional economic communities in the implementation of, follow-up to and review of Agenda

⁵ E/ECA/COE/XX/XX.

2063, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda,

Having examined the Economic Commission for Africa proposed strategic framework and biennial programme plan for the biennium 2018-2019,⁶

1. *Endorses* the Economic Commission for Africa proposed strategic framework and biennial programme plan for the biennium 2018-2019;

2. *Requests* the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa to undertake an independent, comprehensive and thorough review of the intergovernmental structure of the Commission, including the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts, and its link to the programme priorities of the Commission, on the basis of the priorities of Africa, and to report back to the Commission at its fiftieth session;

3. *Decides* to postpone the holding of the meetings of the intergovernmental committees of experts for 2017 pending the finalization of the independent review.

III. Resolutions of the African Union

944(XLIX). Joint strategy of the African Union Commission and the Association of African Central Banks on the establishment of the African central bank and the other financial institutions

The Conference of Ministers,

Recalling article 19 of the Constitutive Act of the African Union, adopted by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity at its thirty-sixth ordinary session, held in Lomé on 11 July 2000, in which the Assembly decided to establish the African financial institutions: the African central bank, the African monetary fund and the African investment bank,

Reaffirming the commitment to the establishment of the African financial institutions as a means of ensuring African financial autonomy for the successful implementation of the continent's development plans, primarily Agenda 2063,

Considering the minimum integration programme adopted by the Conference of African Ministers in Charge of Integration at its fourth meeting, held in Yaoundé in May 2009,⁷ in the spirit of the Sirte Declaration,⁸ with a view to enhancing the capabilities of the regional economic communities, the African Union Commission and the member States to fast-track the integration of Africa,

⁶ E/ECA/COE/35/5.

⁷ Available from:
www.uneca.org/Portals/ctrci/6th/MinimumIntegrationProgrammeEng.pdf.

⁸ Adopted by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity at its fourth extraordinary session, held in Sirte, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, on 9 September 1999.

Recalling that a joint technical committee of the African Union Commission and the Association of African Central Banks was established to define a joint strategy for the establishment of the African central bank,

Welcoming the strong collaboration between the African Union Commission and the Association of African Central Banks in formulating the joint strategy,

Taking note of the report of the joint technical committee on the joint strategy for the establishment of the African central bank and the reservations expressed by the Southern Africa subregion,⁹

Expressing its appreciation to the joint technical committee for the joint strategy for the establishment of the African central bank,

1. *Takes note* of the recommendations set out in the report of the joint technical committee on the joint strategy for the establishment of the African central bank;

2. *Calls upon* the African Union Commission, in collaboration with the Association of African Central Banks and other partners, to take all necessary steps to ensure the effective and successful implementation of the recommendations on the joint strategy and, in particular, of the five-stage approach stipulated therein;

3. *Recommends* the joint strategy for the establishment of the African central bank for adoption by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union at its twenty-seventh ordinary session, to be held in Kigali in July 2016, taking into consideration the reservations expressed by the subregional committee for Southern Africa of the Association of African Central Banks.

4. *Encourages* member States of the African Union to sign and ratify the legal instruments of the African monetary fund and the African investment bank.

945(XLIX). Strengthening of economic research in Africa

The Conference of Ministers,

Taking note of the Declaration of the Fourth Congress of African Economists, held from 16 to 18 November 2015 in Accra, on the theme of industrial policy and economic performance in Africa,¹⁰

Reiterating the importance of economic research as a key instrument in meeting the pressing needs of African countries for economic and social transformation through the appropriate formulation, monitoring and evaluation of development programmes, policies and initiatives, such as Agenda 2063,

Reaffirming that industrialization is a major strategic priority that can contribute to the structural transformation of Africa by the target date of 2063, through the development of dynamic and coherent industrial policy frameworks, the diversification of industries and production structures in Africa and their integration into global value chains, in order to achieve robust and sustained economic performance for sustainable and inclusive development,

⁹ E/ECA/COE/35/13-AU/STC/FMEPI/EXP/13(II).

¹⁰ E/ECA/COE/35/14-AU/STC/FMEPI/EXP/14(II).

Noting with appreciation the work on the implementation of Agenda 2063 currently being undertaken by the African Union Commission, the African Capacity-Building Foundation and other partners,

1. *Approves* the recommendations set out in the report of the Fourth Congress of African Economists;

2. *Calls upon* the African Union Commission, supported by the African Capacity-Building Foundation and African economic research centres, to work closely for the production of a publication on the dynamics of African economies, based on an African perception of African development challenges and opportunities;

3. *Encourages* the African Union Commission, in collaboration with the African Capacity-building Foundation and regional economic communities, to establish an African forum for think tanks to address Africa's development;

4. *Encourages* member States and partners to scale up their commitment to and support for the strengthening of economic research in Africa for the successful implementation of Agenda 2063.

946(XLIX). Draft statute of the African Institute for Remittances

The Conference of Ministers,

Recalling decision Assembly/AU/Dec.440 (XIX), in which the Assembly of the African Union at its nineteenth session, held in Addis Ababa in July 2012, endorsed the establishment of the African Institute for Remittances,

Recalling decision Ex.CL/Dec.808 (XXIV), in which the Executive Council of the African Union at its twenty-fourth session, held in Addis Ababa in January 2014, selected Kenya to host the African Institute for Remittances and requested the African Union Commission to conclude the host agreement with Kenya so as to ensure the formal launch of the Institute in 2014,

Welcoming the formal take-off of the African Institute for Remittances,

Welcoming the preparation of the draft statute of the African Institute for Remittances,

1. *Requests* the member States of the African Union to review the draft statute of the African Institute for Remittances and provide their comments to the African Union, in writing, within four months;

2. *Request* the African Union Commission to submit the amended version of the draft statute of the African Institute for Remittances to the legal experts of the African Union for their review before submitting it for consideration and adoption by the relevant organs of the African Union.

947(XLIX). Draft pan-African investment code

The Conference of Ministers,

Recalling that the third Conference of African Ministers in charge of integration, held in Abidjan on 22 and 23 May 2008, urged the African Union Commission, the regional economic communities and development partners, such as the Economic Commission for Africa and the African Development Bank, to develop a comprehensive investment code for Africa with a view to promoting private sector investment,

Recognizing the need for a comprehensive instrument aimed at promoting, facilitating and protecting investments that foster sustainable development in each member State of the African Union, in particular in the member State where the investment is made,

Commending the work of the African Union Commission in developing and elaborating the draft pan-African investment code,

1. *Takes note of* the pan-African investment code;
2. *Requests* the African Union Commission to proceed with deeper consultations with member States in order to finalize the pan-African investment code.

948(XLIX). Creation of the African inclusive markets excellence centre

The Conference of Ministers,

Recalling the declarations of the African Private Sector Forum at its fifth and seventh meetings, held from 5 to 8 November 2012 in Abidjan and from 3 to 5 December 2014 in Nairobi, respectively,

Recognizing the need to promote regional economic integration, in particular through transformative regional value chains, inclusive markets and business development, leading to job creation, income generation and poverty eradication in Africa,

Having considered the concept note on the creation of the African inclusive markets excellence centre,¹¹

Bearing in mind that such a centre would make an immense contribution to the realization of Agenda 2063,

Requests the African Union Commission to recruit an independent consultant to conduct a feasibility study on the creation of the African inclusive markets excellence centre and recommend options for its operationalization and financial autonomy, and to submit the findings of the study to the member States of the African Union for their consideration.

949(XLIX). Report of the ninth session of the meeting of the Committee of Directors General of Statistics

The Conference of Ministers,

Taking note of the report of the ninth session of the meeting of the Committee of Directors General of Statistics, held from 26 to 28 November 2015 in Libreville, on the theme of the data revolution, the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063,

Reaffirming the importance of statistics as a key instrument in meeting the pressing needs of African countries for economic and social transformation through the appropriate formulation, monitoring and evaluation of development programmes, policies and initiatives, such as Agenda 2063,

Noting with appreciation the work of the African Union Commission and other regional institutions on the harmonization of statistics in Africa,

¹¹ E/ECA/COE/35/19-AU/STC/FMEPI/EXP/19(II).

1. *Approves* the recommendations set out in the report of the ninth session of the meeting of the Committee of Directors General of Statistics;
2. *Calls upon* the African Union Commission, in collaboration with regional economic communities and other partners, to work closely for the rapid operationalization, by the end of June 2016, of pan-African institutions of statistics, such as the pan-African training centre for statistics in Yamoussoukro and the Nelson Mandela pan-African statistics institute in Tunis;
3. *Encourages* member States to allocate at least 0.015 per cent of their budget to statistics development;
4. *Invites* member States that have not ratified the African Charter on Statistics to do so and implement the Strategy for the Harmonization of Statistics in Africa.

950(XLIX). Report of the seventh meeting of the African Union Subcommittee of Directors General of Customs

The Conference of Ministers,

Aware of the ultimate objectives of the African Union integration agenda, as provided for in the Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community, the Constitutive Act of the African Union and Agenda 2063 and the global objectives under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals,

Respectful of the decisions and declarations of African Union, in particular its decisions Assembly/AU/Dec.394 (XVIII), on boosting intra-African trade and fast-tracking the continental free trade area, and Assembly/AU/DEC.531(XXIII), on trade issues, adopted by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union at its eighteenth and twenty-third ordinary sessions, held in Addis Ababa on 29 and 30 January 2012 and in Malabo on 27 June 2014, respectively.

Convinced that customs administrations in Africa play an important role in collecting government revenue, protecting society, facilitating legitimate trade and collecting vital statistics to support policy formulation,

1. *Requests* member States to continue to support the work of the African Union Subcommittee of Directors General of Customs, as it has a direct impact on continental integration;
2. *Urges* member States of the African Union to make adequate resources available to their respective customs administrations to enable them to fulfil their mandates effectively;
3. *Undertakes* to build the capacity of African customs administrations on matters that are vital for revenue collection, including trade facilitation and integration;
4. *Affirms* its commitment to implementing the recommendations, policies and programmes on the single-window concept, coordinated border management and the interconnectivity of computerized customs clearance and information systems, and other allied trade facilitation measures, based on international best practices;
5. *Requests* partners and other international organizations to continue to support the implementation of initiatives for regional integration in Africa, and the programme on boosting intra-African trade;

6. *Undertakes* to enhance the effectiveness of customs administrations in Africa.

951(XLIX).Financing social protection in Africa

The Conference of Ministers,

Recalling the goals of Agenda 2063 and its first 10-year implementation plan on achieving social security and social protection for all, and the goals of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development,

Considering the social policy framework for Africa, including that long-term funding for social protection should be guaranteed through national resources with specific and transparent budget lines,

Considering also the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, their additional protocols on women and older persons and protocols that are being developed on persons with disabilities and the rights of citizens to social protection and social security,

Recalling the Addis Ababa Declaration on Social Protection for Inclusive Development and the establishment of the African Risk Capacity Agency for the protection of the most vulnerable populations when faced with natural disasters,

Recognizing and commending the significant efforts by member States to develop social protection policies and programmes and subsequently to improve budget allocation and introduce innovative funding mechanisms, yet gravely concerned that Africa is the global region with the lowest level of expenditure on social protection,

Alarmed that formal social security regimes cover on average 10-25 per cent of the workforce on the continent and do not cover the majority of workers in the informal economy and rural sectors,

Conscious of the need for equitable fiscal policy and efficient and transparent budgetary allocations that support social protection expenditure as a means of reducing inequality, eradicating poverty and building social cohesion,

1. *Agrees* to encourage and support the progressive realization of universal social protection as a key tool to help Governments to build solid economies to ensure sustainable and inclusive development for all as a means of achieving lasting peace;

2. *Undertakes* to engage with national and regional stakeholders and international partners to develop policies and strategies incorporating the social protection and social security targets of the first 10-year implementation plan of Agenda 2063;

3. *Agrees* to consider setting nationally appropriate spending targets for social protection floors and social security, and undertakes to increase the mobilization of effective domestic resources, through tax reforms and innovative forms of financing that can provide the fiscal space for greater investments on social protection in Africa;

4. *Also agrees* to support the necessary reforms to enhance the technical, infrastructure and institutional capacities of those ministries responsible for social protection, for national dialogue, including employers and workers, and to support the African Risk Capacity Agency on natural disaster management, including increasing its coverage of the most vulnerable populations;

5. *Undertakes* to focus on extending national systems of social security to all, and agrees that the combination of microinsurance with microfinance policies may be used temporarily as one of the possible options to extend the reach of social security to include excluded categories of workers in the informal sector and rural sector;

6. *Calls upon* international partners to assist in evaluating and promoting different policy options for financing social protection and social security, and help member States to benefit from various debt cancellation initiatives;

7. *Agrees* to establish a joint follow-up mechanism on the implementation of the present resolution with the African Union Specialized Technical Committee on Social Development, Labour and Employment.

952(XLIX).First five-year priority programme for the implementation of the Declaration and Plan of Action on Employment, Poverty Eradication and Inclusive Development

The Conference of Ministers,

Recalling the Declaration and Plan of Action on Employment, Poverty Eradication and Inclusive Development,¹² and taking note of the first five-year priority programme for the implementation of the Declaration and Plan of Action,

Recognizing that the Declaration and Plan of Action are cornerstone policies for achieving the aspiration of Agenda 2063 on a prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development,

Recalling its resolution 872 (XLIII), on promoting high-level sustainable growth to reduce unemployment in Africa, adopted at its third Joint Annual Meetings, held in Lilongwe on 30 March 2010,

Gravely concerned about the persistent high levels of unemployment, underemployment and the working poor and how unemployment negatively affects vulnerable groups on the continent, such as young people, women, older persons and persons with disabilities,

Alarmed by the poor progress made towards reducing the productivity gap between Africa and other developing regions of the world and by the competition which is placing significant constraints on the realization of continental policies towards industrialization and productive agriculture,

Conscious of the need to improve the quality and level of funding of employment and social protection policies on the continent to achieve better social cohesion, reduce inequality and eradicate poverty,

Considering the goals and targets of the first 10-year implementation plan of Agenda 2063 in terms of employment, social protection, social security, poverty eradication and productivity, and the related goals and indicators of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,

Considering also the relevant provisions of the first 10-year implementation plan for Agenda 2063 in terms of funding, monitoring and evaluating processes for the implementation of continental policies, in particular the Declaration and Plan of Action on Employment, Poverty Eradication and Inclusive Development, at the national, regional and continental levels,

¹² African Union document Assembly/AU/20(XXIV).

1. *Undertakes* to integrate the Declaration and Plan of Action on Employment, Poverty Eradication on Employment and Poverty Eradication and its first five-year priority programme into national and regional long-term, medium-term and short-term planning systems, using the relevant goals, priority areas and targets of the first 10-year implementation plan of Agenda 2063, and the related baseline information matrix;
2. *Calls upon* the African Union Commission to engage with member States and regional economic communities to provide assistance and support in the development of national and regional plans in 2016 and 2017;
3. *Undertakes* to engage international partners in supporting the efforts of the African Union Commission, member States and regional economic communities in promoting the creation of decent jobs, access to social protection and social security, labour migration and social cohesion;
4. *Also undertakes* to increase significantly and appropriately the budgetary resources allocated to employment policies and to work with international partners to place employment among the development priorities, in the spirit of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the Accra Agenda for Action;
5. *Calls upon* the African Union Commission, in line with the funding principles of Agenda 2063, to accelerate the establishment of an employment and social cohesion fund as the agreed financing mechanism for the Declaration and its Plan of Action, and to submit to it a proposal for such a fund at the next Joint Annual Meetings of the Conference of Ministers in March 2017;
6. *Undertakes* to enhance collaboration with African ministries of labour, labour migration, employment and social protection on planning and funding processes.

953(XLIX).Address and postcode systems in Africa and the electrification and connectivity of post offices in rural areas in Africa

The Conference of Ministers,

Considering the 2010 Addis Ababa Declaration on Information and Communication Technologies in in Africa: Challenges and Prospects for Development, adopted by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union at its fourteenth ordinary session, held in Addis Ababa on 2 February 2010,

Recalling decisions 435 (XIII), 545 (XVI) and 900 (XXVIII) of the Executive Council of the African Union on the sustainable development of the postal sector in Africa,

Recalling also the important role of address and postcode systems in social integration and economic development and, in particular, the right of every individual to have an address, along with the need to facilitate the efficient distribution of basic goods and services,

Taking note of the reports of the African Union Commission on guidelines on address and postcode systems in Africa and the electrification and connectivity of post offices in rural areas in Africa in the framework of leveraging postal networks to foster inclusive social and economic development,

Emphasizing the potential contribution of the postal networks in rural areas to remedying the gaps in infrastructure and providing tangible solutions

to the needs of rural populations in the area of communications, access to financial services and government services and logistics, with a view to contributing to the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals and the fulfilment of Agenda 2063,

Observing the global changes in development of new technologies, the advent of substitution and competition, the emergence of new regulatory frameworks, new policies and new laws affecting the postal industry,

Noting the negative impact of the widening infrastructure gap on the lives of the rural populations in terms of their financial exclusion, the cost of remittances, the digital and communications divide, their limited access to government services and the lack of economic opportunities, as rural inhabitants have limited access to credit and little information on external markets,

Noting also the growing evidence of the powerful role that postal networks can play in social, digital and financial inclusion,

Underscoring the need for postal networks to use broadband and to deploy advanced information and communications technology in order to provide adequate access to basic financial and other services,

Convinced that, by setting up communication centres at the heart of local communities, the project on the electrification and connectivity of post offices in rural areas in Africa will increase the access of rural populations to the internet and business services,

1. *Decides* to prioritize and to include in national development plans the address and postcode systems as part of the infrastructure needed to increase access to basic services;

2. *Encourages* member States implementing such projects to make the necessary political commitment, to prioritize effective internal coordination for implementation and to resolve project funding challenges prior to the start of the project;

3. *Supports* the implementation by the Pan-African Postal Union of its continent-wide project on address and post codes;

4. *Calls upon* member States, in particular the thirteen pilot countries engaged in the project on the electrification and connectivity in rural areas, to take ownership and integrate it into their national development plans and strategies;

5. *Encourages* other member States to join the project;

6. *Urges* member States to explore multiple sources of funding, such as national budgets, universal service funds, public-private partnerships and international development partners, with a view to ensuring successful implementation of the project;

7. *Calls upon* donors to support and commit funds to ensure the implementation of both projects, on address and postcode systems and on the electrification and connectivity of post offices in rural areas;

8. *Requests* the African Union Commission, in collaboration with the Pan-African Postal Union, to report to its relevant organs on the implementation of both projects.