



ARC Briefing Note on the Outcomes of the Tenth African Union Summit

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ARC BRIEFING NOTE ON THE OUTCOMES OF THE TENTH AFRICAN UNION SUMMIT: 25 JANUARY - 2 FEBRUARY 2008

The tenth African Union (AU) Summit took place at the UN Conference Centre in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 25 January to 2 February 2008. The Summit included sessions of the Permanent Representatives Committee (held from 25-26 January), the Executive Council (27-29 January), and the AU Assembly (31 January to 2 February). The main theme of the Summit was "Industrial Development for Africa."

The Permanent Representatives Committee considered a range of issues and draft decisions that were taken up subsequently by the Council and Assembly. At the close of its meeting, the Executive Council had adopted 37 decisions and one declaration, including decisions on: the report of the third Ordinary Session of the African Ministerial Conference on Science and Technology; African Education, Science and Technology Fund; the outcome of the sixth Ordinary Session of the African Ministers' Council on Water; a proposal to make water and sanitation the theme of the July 2008 AU Summit; and the Tunis Declaration on International Solidarity against Climate Change in Africa and the Mediterranean Region.

The Assembly of Heads of State and Government agreed to 21 decisions and three declarations, many of which related to the Summit's themes. These outcomes included decisions on the: strengthening of cooperation between Africa and the Tokyo International Conference on African Development; implementation of the Science and Technology Consolidated Plan of Action; establishment of an African Education, Science and Technology Fund; Action Plan for the Accelerated Industrial Development of Africa; extension of the African Continental Shelf and Climate Change; and Millennium Development Goals. The Assembly also adopted a declaration on Africa's Industrial Development.

This *ARC Briefing Note* summarizes the decisions and declarations agreed to by the Executive Council and Assembly as they relate to sustainable development.

Editors Note: IISD Reporting Services was not physically present at the AU Summit, and this *Briefing Note* was prepared based on the decisions adopted at the Summit. IISD's coverage of previous AU Summit's can be found at <http://www.iisd.ca/africa/aauss/>

A BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO THE AFRICAN UNION

The AU is the principal organization for the promotion of socioeconomic integration across the continent. It includes 53 African countries as member states, while Morocco has special status. The Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) called for its establishment in the Sirte

Declaration on 9 September 1999, as a means to accelerate integration, so that Africa could play a significant role in the global economy, and to address shared social, economic and political problems. The Constitutive Act of the AU was adopted at the thirty-sixth Ordinary Session/ fourth Ordinary Session of the African Economic Community held from 10-12 July 2000 in Lome, Togo. The Constitutive Act entered into force in 2001. The AU's objectives include: achieving greater unity and solidarity between African countries and the peoples of Africa; promoting and defending common African positions on issues; encouraging international cooperation; establishing enabling conditions for the continent to play its rightful role in the global economy and in international negotiations; promoting sustainable development and integration of African economies; and advancing the continent's development through research in all fields, particularly science and technology.

The principal organs of the AU include the Assembly, Executive Council, Commission, Permanent Representatives Committee, Peace and Security Council, Pan-African Parliament, and the Economic, Social and Cultural Council, as well as the Court of Justice, Financial Institutions, and Specialized Technical Committees, which include the Committee on Industry, Science and Technology, Energy, Natural Resources and Environment. The outgoing AU Chair is John Kufuor, President of Ghana, and the incoming Chair is Jakaya Kikwete, President of the Republic of Tanzania.

ASSEMBLY: The AU Assembly is composed of the Heads of State and Government of AU member states or their accredited representatives. The Assembly acts as the supreme organ of the AU and is mandated to: determine the common policies of the Union; consider and take decisions on reports and recommendations from other AU bodies; consider requests for membership of the AU; establish any organ of the Union; monitor the implementation of AU policies and decisions as well ensure compliance by all member states; adopt the AU budget; give directives to the Executive Council on the management of conflicts, war and other emergency situations and on the restoration of peace; appoint and terminate the appointment of judges of the Court of Justice; and appoint the Chair of the Commission, his or her deputies and

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Commissioners, and determine their functions and terms of office. The first Ordinary Session of the Assembly was held in Durban, South Africa from 9-10 July 2002.

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL: The Executive Council of Ministers of the AU is composed of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs or other ministers or authorities designated by member states. The Executive Council meets at least twice a year in ordinary sessions. It can also meet in an extraordinary session at the request of any member state and upon approval by two-thirds of all member states. The Executive Council is mandated to coordinate and take decisions on policies in areas of common interest to the member states, including: foreign trade; energy, industry and mineral resources; food, agricultural and animal resources, livestock production and forestry; water resources and irrigation; environmental protection, humanitarian action and disaster response and relief; transport and communications; insurance; education, culture, health and human resources development; science and technology; nationality, residency and immigration matters; and social security.

PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVES COMMITTEE: The Permanent Representatives Council consists of permanent representatives from all AU member states. It is responsible for preparing the work of the Executive Council and for acting on the Council's instructions.

AU COMMISSION: The African Union Commission (AUC) is responsible for the day-to-day management of the AU. Its functions include: representing the AU in intergovernmental forums; elaborating draft common positions; preparing strategic plans and studies for consideration by the Executive Council; and promoting and harmonizing the programmes and policies of the AU and Regional Economic Communities (RECs). The outgoing chair and deputy chair of the AUC are Alpha Omar Konare (Mali) and Patrick Mazimhaka (Rwanda). The incoming chair and deputy chair are Jean Ping (Gabon) and Erastus Mwencha (Kenya).

The AUC comprises the Office of the Legal Counsel and the following Directorates: Conferences and Events; Peace and Security; Political Affairs; Infrastructure and Energy; Social Affairs; Human Resources, Science and Technology; Trade and Industry; Rural Economy and Agriculture; and Economic Affairs.

REPORT OF THE SUMMIT

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

This section summarizes the decisions taken by the Executive Council that relate to sustainable development.

REPORT OF THE THIRD ORDINARY SESSION OF THE AFRICAN MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (AMCOST III):

In its decision (EX.CL/Dec.387 (XII)), the Executive Council requested member states and the RECs to champion the implementation of Africa's Science and Technology Consolidated Plan of Action at the local, national and regional levels. The Council supported the formation of the Pan-African Association of African Women in Science and Technology and requested the AUC and member states to gather gender-disaggregated data about women in science and technology at the country level, in order to formulate concrete initiatives and programmes for women. The Council also requested the AUC and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) to prepare a common framework, coordinated by the Bureau of AMCOST and the Bureau of the African Ministerial Conference on Environment (AMCEN), in order to determine the rationale and modalities for establishing a panel on climate change. The Council further requested the AUC to present the Revised Model Law on Biosafety to all relevant departments and sectors in member states for their comments. In addition the Council requested the AUC, in consultation with member states, to develop a comprehensive framework on intellectual

property, individual and community rights to protect traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions, including the centralization of all matters related to intellectual property, individual and community rights. The Council also requested the AUC to develop a bio-prospecting policy framework that ensures beneficial utilization and equitable commercialization of biotic resources, including the creation of a central national control system to manage bio-prospecting affairs in all their diversity.

AFRICAN EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY FUND:

In the decision (EX.CL/Dec.389 (XII)), the Executive Council expressed its conviction regarding the need for an African continental funding mechanism for both education and science and technology, adding that the African Development Bank (AfDB), as the lead financial institution of the continent, should host such funds. The Council called for the establishment of a combined African Education, Science and Technology Fund governed and managed by AfDB and the AUC, in coordination with the Bureau of AMCOST and the Conference of African Ministers of Education.

OUTCOME OF THE SIXTH ORDINARY SESSION OF THE AFRICAN MINISTERS' COUNCIL ON WATER (AMCOW-6):

In the decision (EX.CL/Dec.391 (XII)), the Executive Council endorsed the Brazzaville Declaration and decisions on water and sanitation in Africa adopted at AMCOW-6 and supported the initiative to strengthen AMCOW's relationship with African civil society organizations to enhance the achievement of the water and sanitation Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in Africa. The Council called on member states to increase their cooperative efforts to create more transboundary water basin organizations, where they do not exist, for the sustainable and integrated management of surface and underground waters, and urged them to make use of the "Guidelines for the Establishment of Cooperative Framework Agreement for the integrated Management of Transboundary Basins" developed by the AUC. The Council also urged Africa's development partners to increase their support to AMCOW to ensure the sustainable management and utilization of the continent's water resources and to promote sanitation, at the country level, in order to support the achievement of the relevant MDGs in Africa. The Council further requested the AUC, AfDB, and the United Nations Environment Programme, as well as the NEPAD Secretariat, to continue to provide policy and institutional support to the AMCOW.

PROPOSAL TO MAKE WATER AND SANITATION THE THEME OF THE JULY 2008 SUMMIT:

In the decision (EX.CL/Dec.392 (XII)), the Executive Council recommended that "Water and Sanitation" be the theme of the July 2008 Summit of the African Union Heads of State and Government. The Council also called upon the Chair of the UN Secretary-General's Advisory Board to liaise with the AUC Chair and the Government of Egypt to lead the preparation of the relevant documents and to convene a technical preparatory meeting for the Summit. The Council further called upon the UN Secretary-General to continue to support the efforts of member states to develop their respective water and sanitation sectors in order to enhance the achievement of sustainable development and to meet the MDGs.

TUNIS DECLARATION ON INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY AGAINST CLIMATE CHANGE IN AFRICA AND THE MEDITERRANEAN REGION:

In the decision (EX.CL/Dec.413 (XII)), the Executive Council expressed concern at the seriousness of the phenomenon of climatic changes, which constitute one of the most important challenges in the international arena, especially for African countries that are still striving to acquire the appropriate tools and mechanisms to cope with the repercussions of this phenomenon and its economic and social implications. The

Council welcomed the Tunis Declaration and Action Plan on International Solidarity against Climate Change in Africa and the Mediterranean region and decided that the Declaration be referred to AMCEN and AMCOST for further discussion.

AU ASSEMBLY

This section summarizes the decisions taken by the Assembly that relate to sustainable development.

STRENGTHENING OF COOPERATION BETWEEN AFRICA AND THE TOKYO INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT (TICAD):

In the decision (Assembly/AU/Dec.171 (X)), the Assembly called upon member states, the AUC and the RECs to fully cooperate with the TICAD process in order to make progress "Towards a Vibrant Africa: A Continent of Hope and Opportunity," which is the main theme of TICAD IV. The Assembly also called upon member states to elaborate concrete programmes and projects relating to the main areas of TICAD IV cooperation, namely, boosting economic growth, achieving the MDGs (ensuring human security), peace consolidation, and democratization and addressing environmental issues and climate change.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY CONSOLIDATED PLAN OF ACTION:

In the decision (Assembly/AU/Dec.172 (X)), the Assembly endorsed the decision of the Executive Council on the report of the third Ordinary Session of the AMCOST, welcomed the formation of a Pan African Association of African Women in Science and Technology, and called on the RECs to establish science and technology desks and/or focal points by 2009 in order to improve communication, cooperation and information sharing.

ESTABLISHMENT OF AN AFRICAN EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY FUND: In the decision (Assembly/AU/Dec.174 (X)), the Assembly authorized the establishment of an African Education, Science and Technology Fund and requested the AUC and the AfDB to expedite the creation of the Fund by 2009.

ACTION PLAN FOR THE ACCELERATED INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT OF AFRICA: In the decision (Assembly/AU/Dec.175 (X)), the Assembly endorsed the Action Plan for the Accelerated Development of Africa and requested the AUC to disseminate the Action Plan and organize regional meetings in Africa, in collaboration with the RECs, Regional Development Banks, the UN Economic Commission for Africa, AfDB, World Bank, European Investment Bank, International Finance Corporation, UN Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and other interested partners. These regional meetings would involve the participation of all industrial development stakeholders, in order to support the effective implementation of the Action Plan.

EXTENSION OF THE AFRICAN CONTINENTAL SHELF AND CLIMATE CHANGE: In the decision (Assembly/AU/Dec.179 (X)), the Assembly expressed its views regarding the major geopolitical and strategic stakes linked to the African continental shelf and of its abundant mineral and biological resources, which constitute an important source of foreign currency earnings for the economic development of the continent. In this regard, the Assembly called on coastal member states to speed up the process of preparing and submitting the claims for the extension of the limits of their continental shelf, and requested the AUC to assist member states in this regard, with the view to meeting the UN Convention on the Law of Sea's deadline of 12 May 2009. The Assembly further encouraged member states to submit to the UN General Assembly a recommendation for a postponement, by an additional period of 10 years, the 12 May 2009 deadline, while striving to meet the set deadline. The Assembly further underscored the need to speed up the process, adopt an African

common position on this issue, and requested the AUC to engage, in collaboration with member states, in a process to designate an eminent African personality as Special Envoy of the Union in charge of maritime and climate change matters.

MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS (MDGs):

In the decision (Assembly/AU/Dec.180 (X)), the Assembly commended and supported the establishment by the UN Secretary-General of the MDGs Africa Steering Group. The Assembly also welcomed the initiative of the Secretary-General and other partners to hold meetings on the MDGs in September 2008 to find ways to reinforce the partnership between developed and developing countries. The Assembly called upon the G8 to follow through with its commitments made at the Gleneagles Summit and other international commitments in order to scale-up aid disbursement to Africa in support of the MDGs. The Assembly also expressed its appreciation in relation to the scaling-up of efforts by the UN system to support Africa's Development Agenda through such initiatives as the UN 10-Year capacity building programme in support of the AU and its NEPAD programme.

DECLARATION ON AFRICA'S INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: In the declaration (Assembly/AU/Decl.1 (X)), Heads of State and Government of the member states committed to:

- accelerate the pace of Africa's industrial development, especially the conversion of natural resources to higher value-added products;
- adopt policies and programmes for natural resource processing and greater value addition in Africa;
- increase investment in science and technology, human capital development, with emphasis on technical training, to enhance Africa's industrial productivity and competitiveness;
- strengthen African industrial research and development institutions and agencies to develop innovative approaches and programmes for the accelerated industrial development of Africa; and
- take necessary measures at the national level to implement the Action Plan.

Heads of State and Government also called on Africa's development partners to adopt policies and measures to encourage their companies to increase investment in local processing within Africa of the continent's natural resources, and called on UNIDO to strengthen its visibility in Africa by implementing a programme that is regionally balanced and more focused towards Africa.

ELECTION OF THE CHAIRPERSON AND DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION:

The Assembly elected Gabon's Foreign Affairs Minister, Jean Ping, as the new Chair of the AUC, with a two-thirds majority vote, for a four-year mandate. Erastus Mwencha (Kenya), Secretary General of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa, was elected as the deputy chair of the AUC.

ELECTION OF THE COMMISSIONERS OF THE AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION: The Assembly elected seven Commissioners out of the eight portfolios of the AUC. The new Commissioners are: Ramtane Lamamra, Algeria (Peace and Security); Julia Dolly Joiner, Gambia (Political Affairs); Elham Mahmood Ahmed Ibrahim, Egypt (Infrastructure and Energy); Biencie Philomina Gawanas, Namibia (Social Affairs); Jean Pierre Onvehoun Ezin, Benin (Human Resources, Science and Technology); Elizabeth Tankeu, Cameroon (Trade and Industry); and Maxwell Mkwelalamba, Malawi (Economic Affairs). The Assembly agreed that the post for the Commissioner of Rural Economy and Agriculture would be decided at an extraordinary meeting of the Council in Arusha, Tanzania, in April 2008. The post has been reserved for a female candidate from the Eastern Africa region.



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