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**SPECIALIZED TECHNICAL COMMITTEE ON  
COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGIES (STC-CICT)  
THIRD ORDINARY SESSION,  
25 - 26 OCTOBER 2019,  
SHARM EL SHEIKH, EGYPT**

**AU/STC-CICT-3/MIN/Rpt**  
Original : English

**MINISTERIAL REPORT**

## MINISTERIAL REPORT

### I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Third Ordinary Session of the African Union Specialized Technical Committee on Communication and Information Communication Technologies (STC-CICT-3) was held at Rixos Premium Seagate Hotel, Sharm El Sheikh, Arab Republic of Egypt, from 25 to 26 October 2019. The Experts' Meeting held from 22 to 24 October 2019, preceded the Ministerial Conference. The Ministers deliberated on the Report of the Experts' Session and other agenda items as per **Annex 1**.

### II. ATTENDANCE

2. The following Member States took part in the Meeting: Algeria, Angola, Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Chad, Comoros, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Eswatini, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, Sudan, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

3. Seychelles, South Sudan and Tunisia sent apologies. The List of Participants is attached as **Annex 2**.

4. The following Regional Economic Communities (RECs) were also in attendance: Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

5. The following African and International Organizations and Agencies also took part: African Telecommunication Union (ATU), Pan African Postal Union (PAPU), United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

6. The following organizations were also present: Internet Society (ISOC), Association of Progressive Communications (APC) and Intel.

### III. OPENING CEREMONY

7. The official opening was officiated by the Minister of Communications and Information Technology of the Arab Republic of Egypt, who also gave the keynote address. The following officials also delivered opening statements: the Representative of the outgoing Chairperson of the STC Bureau, H.E Dina Mufti, Ambassador of Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia to the Arab Republic of Egypt, H.E Houlin Zhao Secretary General of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and H.E. Dr. Amani Abou-Zeid, Commissioner for Infrastructure and Energy, African Union Commission.

#### **Remarks by H. E, Dr. Amr S. Talaat, Minister of Communications and Information Technology of the Arab Republic of Egypt**

8. H.E. Dr. Amr S. Talaat, Minister of Communications and Information Technology of the Arab Republic of Egypt extended his gratitude to the AU Member

States for having entrusted Egypt to serve as Chair of the Bureau. He warmly welcomed the delegates to Sharm El Sheikh and conveyed the greetings of H.E. Abdel Fattah El-Sisi, President of the Arab Republic of Egypt and Chairperson of the African Union (AU).

9. The Honourable Minister highlighted the strategic importance of ICTs in the socio-economic development of Africa, and further highlighted the transforming power of Artificial Intelligence (AI), calling for the establishment of an African Expert Working Group to develop a common African approach on AI, as well as capacity building framework that supports the adoption of AI by Africans to achieve the SDGs.

10. The Honourable Minister concluded his remarks by thanking the outgoing Bureau, Member States Experts and the African Union Commission for the support rendered during their tenure, and welcomed all African Ministers and delegates to participate in the World Radiocommunication Conference 2019 (WRC-19) hosted by Egypt.

#### **Remarks by H. E Houlin Zhao Secretary General of ITU**

11. H.E Houlin Zhao recalled that ICTs today are on the top of the agenda of all international meetings and summits notably the FOCAC, TICAD and the very recent Africa-Russia Summit. He also stressed the significant progress made by African countries in increasing access to their populations.

12. H.E Houlin Zhao reiterated the support of ITU to work with the African Union and all African States to speed up the digital transformation, and enable the Continent to reap the social and economic benefits of new technologies. He concluded by congratulating Africa and Ethiopia for the award of Nobel Peace Prize to H.E Abiy Ahmed Prime Minister of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia.

#### **Remarks by H.E. Dr Amani ABOU-ZEID, AU Commissioner for Infrastructure and Energy, African Union Commission**

13. In her speech, the AUC Commissioner for Infrastructure and Energy, outlined the contributions of the African Union Commission to the development of the ICT and Communication Sectors in Africa and noted a number of AU programmes and projects that have been implemented in this regard.

14. H.E. Dr Amani ABOU-ZEID seized the opportunity to highlight the need for African countries to work together to ensure connectivity and access to all African citizens before 2030. She further emphasized the importance of adopting a comprehensive Digital Transformation Strategy for Africa, to serve as a blueprint and master plan for transforming the African economy and society.

#### **Remarks by H.E Dina Mufti, Ambassador of Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia to the Arab Republic of Egypt.**

15. H.E Ambassador Dina Mufti, representing Ethiopia as Chair of outgoing Bureau, gave an overview of the activities of the STC Bureau since the last session of the STC,

and highlighted how they set important directions towards establishing the roadmap and ICT vision for Africa.

16. He noted that ongoing ICT and communication initiatives are taking Africa forward and assisting Member States in their endeavour to build a connected and secure Africa. He also briefed the Meeting on Ethiopia’s enthusiastic plans to develop green ICT infrastructure and Indigenous ICT technology, in response to the human needs of the current century that will help to connect Africa with full-fledged security.

**IV. PROCEDURAL MATTERS**

17. The session adopted the agenda and work program attached as **Annex 1**.

**V. ELECTION OF CCICT-3 BUREAU**

18. Following due consultations within the regions, and taking into account geographical rotation in accordance with Rules and Procedure of the STC-CICT, the Bureau was elected. The Central African Region ceded the chairmanship of the Bureau for the next 2 years to the Northern region. Egypt was nominated by the Northern Region. Accordingly, the composition of the Bureau of the STC (2019-2021) is as follows:

<b>NORTHERN AFRICA</b>	
<b>Egypt</b>	Chair
<b>CENTRAL AFRICA</b>	
<b>Burundi</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> Vice Chair
<b>SOUTHERN AFRICA</b>	
<b>Malawi</b>	2 <sup>nd</sup> Vice Chair
<b>WESTERN AFRICA</b>	
<b>Sierra Leone</b>	3 <sup>rd</sup> Vice Chair
<b>EASTERN AFRICA</b>	
<b>Djibouti</b>	Rapporteur

**VI. CONSIDERATION OF THE EXPERTS REPORT**

19. The Rapporteur of the outgoing Bureau (Ghana) presented the Report of the Experts’ Session, highlighting the progress achieved in various ICT and Communication projects and programmes, as well as the outcome of the discussions on the draft Africa Digital Transformation Strategy (DTS) and the implementation of the African Union communication and advocacy strategy.

20. Following very constructive discussions on the Digital Transformation Strategy (DTS), Member States commended AUC for the initiative and requested more time to provide inputs to the DTS.

21. It was agreed to open the DTS until 8 November 2019. The AU Commission is requested to duly consider the received inputs and finalize the document by 15 November 2019 and submit for consideration and adoption by the AU Summit in January 2020.

22. The Report of the Experts was endorsed by the session with amendments (**Annex 3**):

## **VII. CONSIDERATION AND ADOPTION OF THE 2019 SHARM EL SHEIKH DECLARATION**

23. The draft Declaration was presented by the Rapporteur of the Bureau (Djibouti). Following discussions, the Ministers adopted the **2019 Sharm El Sheikh Declaration (Annex 4)**.

## **VIII. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

24. The STC expressed its support for Côte d'Ivoire for hosting the UPU Congress in 2020, and took note of Burkina Faso's concern about the increasing use of ICTs for criminal activities and terrorism in the Sahel region and Mauritania's request for the AU Commission to support the exchange of best practices and experiences among Member States.

## **IX. VOTE OF THANKS**

25. On behalf of all the delegations, the Minister of Communication of Sierra Leone gave a Vote of Thanks (**Annex 5**).

## **X. CONSIDERATION AND ADOPTION OF THE MINISTERS' REPORT**

26. The Ministers adopted this Report.

## **XI. CLOSING CEREMONY:**

27. In her closing remarks, the AUC Commissioner for Infrastructure and Energy expressed her gratitude for the presence and active participation of all delegates. She thanked the Egyptian Government for the excellent preparation and support to the Meeting. The Commissioner observed that the Ministerial Declaration shows the collective endorsement and consensus for digital transformation as an impetus for the integration of the Continent.

28. The Chairperson of STC-CICT-3 thanked all Members of the Bureau, the Ministers and all delegations of the Member States and Organisations that participated and worked hard towards the success of the Meeting. He observed that the results of the Meeting not only spoke for themselves, attesting to the efforts put into preparing for the Meeting, but also highlighted what needs to be done over the next two years, in order to effectively enable Africa to embrace its digital future.

# **ANNEX 1: AGENDA AND WORK PROGRAMME**

## **AGENDA**

1. Opening ceremony;
2. Adoption of Agenda and Work Program;
3. Election of the Bureau of the STC;
4. Consideration of the experts' session report;
5. Adoption of the draft 2019 Sharm El Sheikh Declaration;
6. Consideration of date and venue of next STC;
7. Consideration and adoption of the Ministerial session's report;
8. Any other business
9. Closing ceremony

# WORK PROGRAMME

08:00-08:30

Registration

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08:30-9:30

**Opening ceremony- MC: Director**

- H.E Dr Amr S. TALAAT, Minister of Communications and Information Technology of the Arab Republic of Egypt, Keynote Speaker
- Representative of the World Bank (tbc)
- Mr Houlin ZHAO, IUT Secretary General (tbc)
- Remarks by H.E Dr Amani ABOU-ZEID, AU Commissioner for Infrastructure and Energy
- Remark by Ethiopia, Chair of the STC

10:00-10:30

**Procedural Matters**

- Election of the Bureau of the STC
- Adoption of Agenda and Work Program

09:30-10:00

**Group photo****Tea/Coffee Break for participants** (Lobby next to Conference Hall)**Tea/Coffee Break for Ministers** (Executive Lounge)**Press Conference** (Conference Hall)**SESSION TWO: Working session- Closed session**

10:00-11:00

- Presentation of the experts' session report (Ghana)
- Consideration and adoption of the Expert report

11:00-13:30

- **Friday Prayer**
- **Lunch Break**

**SESSION THREE: Working session (Cont.)- Closed session**

13:30-14:45

- Consideration and adoption of the Draft Declaration

14:45-15:00

**Coffee/tea break**

15:00-17:00

Discussions, conclusions and recommendations

**End of Day One.**

## DRAFT PROGRAM

**DAY TWO**

**Saturday, 26 October 2019**

**SESSION FOUR**

**Working session-Closed session**

**09:00-12:30**

- Consideration and adoption of the Ministerial session's report
- Consideration of date and venue of next STC
- Any other business
- Vote of thanks by the Republic of Sierra Leone
- Closing Remarks of Dr Amani ABOU-ZEID, AU Commissioner for Infrastructure and Energy
- Closing Remarks by the elected Chair of the CCICT-3
- Press Conference (Conference hall)

**12:30-14:30**

**Lunch Break**

**14:30- 17:00**

**Bilateral, Meeting with Elected Bureau**

## ANNEX 2: Participating Countries

S/N	Countries	Name	Position	Email
1	Algeria			
2	Angola			
3	Benin			
4	Burkina Faso			
5	Burundi			
6	Cameroon			
7	Comoros			
8	Congo			
9	Côte d'Ivoire			
10	Democratic Republic of Congo			
11	Djibouti			
12	Egypt			
13	Eritrea			
14	Eswatini			
15	Ethiopia			
16	Gabon			
17	Gambia			
18	Ghana			
19	Kenya			
20	Lesotho			
21	Liberia			
22	Malawi			
23	Mali			
24	Mauritania			
25	Mozambique			
26	Namibia			
27	Niger			
28	Nigeria			
29	Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic			
30	Senegal			
31	Sierra Leone			
32	Somalia			
33	South Africa			
34	Sudan			

35	Uganda			
36	Zambia			
37	Zimbabwe			

**ANNEX 3: Report of Experts' Session**

**ANNEX 4: 2019 Sharm El Sheikh Declaration**

**ANNEX 5: Vote of Thanks**

**VOTE OF THANKS  
TO THE ARABIC REPUBLIC OF EGYPT**

First, it's my privilege to have been asked to propose a vote of thanks on this occasion.

We, the Ministers in charge of Communications and Information Technologies (CIT) of the African Union, gathered in the beautiful city of Sharm El Sheikh, from 25 to 26 October 2019 for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Ordinary Session of the African Union Specialized Technical Committee (STC) on Communication and ICT.

Made note of gratitude and satisfaction of the availability of Political and Administrative authorities of the Egyptian People for the outstanding services provided to us during our stay in Sharm El Sheikh;

Appreciating the unshakeable support of the host country, the Arab Republic of Egypt to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Ordinary Session of the African Union Specialized Technical Committee (STC) on Communication and ICT (CICT);

Express our deep gratitude, to the Authorities of the Arab Republic of Egypt for their warm welcome and their superb hospitality which delegates enjoyed and to the AUC for the quality of the organization of the STC.

Express by this vote of thanks, their sincere and deferent thanks to His Excellence, Abdel Fattah EL-SISI, President of the Arab Republic of Egypt, to the Government and the entire people of the Arab Republic of Egypt and to Dr Amani ABOU-ZEID, Commissioner of Infrastructure and Energy and to the entire AU Commission.

**Done in Sharm El Sheikh, on the 26<sup>th</sup> October 2019**