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Telephone: 251 11 551 0595 Fax: 251 11 551 0249 P. O. Box 3243 Addis Ababa, ETHIOPIA
www.africa-union.org

**Fourth Meeting of the AU/ RECs
Committee on Coordination
26-27 June 2006
Banjul, The Gambia**

REPORT

I. Introduction

1. The Fourth meeting of the AU/RECs Committee on Coordination was held at Karaiba, Hotel Conference Center in Banjul, The Gambia, from 26 to 27 June 2006 at the invitation of the African Union Commission (AUC).

2. The meeting was attended by:

- His Excellency Dr. Atalla Hamad Bashir, Executive Secretary of IGAD;
- His Excellency Mr. Sindiso Ngwenya, Deputy Secretary General of COMESA ;
- His Excellency Dr Maxwell Mkwezalamba, AU Commissioner for Economic Affairs;
- Her Excellency Mrs. Elisabeth Tankeu, AU Commissioner for Trade and Industry;
- His Excellency Dr. Bernard Zoba, AU Commissioner for Infrastructure and Energy;
- Representatives of CEN-SAD, ECCAS, ECOWAS, EAC and SADC,
- Representatives of UNECA and ADB.

3. Also in attendance were Representatives of OATUU, AFCAC and UNLO-AU.

II. Agenda item 1: Opening of the meeting

4. The Meeting on Coordination was officially opened by Honourable Alieu NGum, Secretary of State for Trade, Industry & Employment of The Gambia. The Secretary of State welcomed all participants to The Gambia and wished them a good stay in Banjul. In his remarks, he stressed the important role of the coordination between the African Union and the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and the need to work closely for the achievement of the African integration agenda. He also put emphasis on the rationalization process launched by the first meeting of the Ministers of Integration held in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso and hoped that their recommendations will be endorsed by the forthcoming AU Assembly Heads of State and Government.

5. His Excellency Mr. Patrick Mazimhaka, Deputy Chairperson of the African Union Commission thanked the participants for attending the meeting. He welcomed the close cooperation that exists between and among the African Union Commission and the RECs in the implementation of the integration agenda of the Continent. The Deputy Chairperson recalled the follow up activities made by the AUC since the last Abuja coordination meeting. In this regard, he indicated that the Draft Protocol on relations

between the AU and the RECs signature had been delayed to take into account the current discussions on rationalization of RECs. He expressed the hope that the protocol would be submitted for signature very soon.

6. He briefly outlined the achievements made on peace and security and political issues as well as on development programmes in social, infrastructure, agriculture and food security sectors. He also informed the meeting about the work that has been done on internet linkage development programmes with the RECs, which essentially involves the integration of the information systems.

7. In conclusion, he made reference to a number of challenges the African economy is facing such as the recent increases in oil prices. In this regard, he quoted the relevant decision of the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government on the establishment of an Oil Fund within the African Union to mitigate the effect of the increase in oil prices on African Countries and that the Terms of reference for a study have been developed.

III. Agenda item 2 : Adoption of the agenda and organization of work

8. The meeting adopted the following agenda:

- Opening
 - Introductory Remarks by H.E. Mr. Patrick Mazimhaka, Vice Chairperson of the African Union Commission
 - Welcome Remarks by a Representative of the Gambian Government
- Adoption of the Agenda and Organisation of Work
- Exchange of views on the major challenges in Africa and in the World
- Presentation on the Status of Integration (by each REC)
- Consideration of the Report of the Fifth Meeting of the Committee of Secretariat Officials
- Any other Business
- Adoption of the Report
- Date and venue of the next Meeting
- Closing

IV. Agenda item 3: Exchange of views on the major challenges in Africa and in the World

9. Mrs. Elisabeth Tankeu, Commissioner for Trade and Industry briefed the meeting on the challenges facing Africa in connection with EPA negotiations, AGOA initiative as well as the forthcoming the G8 Summit, China-Africa and India-Africa Fora. She called on the meeting especially

AUC and RECs to meet and elaborate strategies for the various challenges. She also indicated that it is high time for Africa to move from the stage of raw materials producer or seller to the stage of industrial production.

10. In discussion, the meeting was of the view that there is a need for Africa to organize itself better when engaging in negotiations with its partners. African should adopt common positions and negotiating strategies before entering into negotiations. In this regard, the meeting recognized that the AU should play a coordinating role in these negotiations in collaboration Member States and the RECs.

11. The meeting therefore decided on the following:

- The AUC should convene, as soon as possible, a meeting of the RECs in order to adopt a common position paper on negotiations strategy;
- The RECs should communicate to the AUC their calendars of negotiations;
- The ECA should support the AUC and the RECs in the preparations for negotiations.

12. H. E. Dr Bernard Zoba, the AU Commissioner for Infrastructure and Energy briefed the meeting on the challenges of infrastructure development in Africa. In his brief, he indicated that the AUC is developing an integrated continental strategy in infrastructure as well as concrete projects and master plans on energy, transport and telecommunications. He also informed the meeting that a coordination meeting at continental level is planned for September 2006 in association with the RECs, UNECA and ADB.

13. In discussion, the meeting suggested that the strategy plans currently being implemented by the RECs should be taken on board while elaborating the Continental framework. The meeting, therefore, decided that the AU framework should include:

- Programmes of manufacturing spare parts for infrastructure equipment;
- Programmes engaging local entrepreneurs in infrastructure construction and creating conducive environment for decent job creation; and
- Infrastructure financing mechanisms.

V. Agenda item 4: Presentation on the Status of the integration (by each RECs)

14. As complement to their presentations made at the first Conference of African Ministers of Integration in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, in March 2006, which is annexed to the present report, the RECs presented up dates of their activities as follows:

A. CEN-SAD

15. CEN-SAD is planning to launch an exchanges liberalization process by a gradual removal of tariffs and non tariffs barriers between Member States with technical assistance from UNECA and ADB.

16. CEN-SAD is also implementing programmes on infrastructure namely, the Transsaharian Al Kaddafi road between Libya-Chad-Niger and Libya-Sudan-Eritrea; railways project between Libya-Chad-Niger as well as AFRICARAIL between Burkina Faso-Benin-Niger-Togo.

17. Water and environmental projects are also been implemented with the assistance of Sahel Saharan Observatory based in Tunis, Tunisia, as well as the Green Wall project to control the progression of the Sahara desert. In addition actions also have been undertaken on peace and security matters within and between Member States.

18. During the 8th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Leaders and Heads of State, the adherence of CEN-SAD to the Abuja Treaty of 03 june 1991 was reaffirmed. At the initiative of the Leader of the Revolution, brother Muammar Al Kaddafi, the Current Chairperson of CEN-SAD, the Assembly adopted a Resolution on the institutional regrouping and the merging of programmes and policies of CEN-SAD, ECOWAS and AMU.

B. COMESA

19. On the basis of a Regional Indicative Programme adopted by the COMESA Member States in 2003, COMESA concluded a Contribution Agreement with the European Union in July 2005. Under that Agreement the European Union is financing the COMESA, IGAD, EAC and IOC integration programmes over the next four years under EDF9. In anticipation of that Agreement, COMESA, EAC, IGAD and IOC adopted new Agreements between them to focus on attaining co-ordinated approach to their integration arrangements. In addition the programming for financing under EDF10 is being planned jointly with IOC, IGAD and EAC. This cooperation is a sign that the REC's are already harmonizing and coordinating their activities.

20. COMESA has also established a Fund for Development Cooperation (COMESA Fund) which has two windows. One window is an adjustment facility that will cover costs resulting from implementation of the trade

liberalization programmes as the Members States transit from the FTA to a Customs Union. The second window is for infrastructural development. The infrastructural development under the Fund will be based on the priority investment plan for infrastructure adopted by the COMESA Summit in 2004. The Member States will provide seed funding to the COMESA Fund while other funds will be leveraged from the private sector and from the cooperating partners. The COMESA Fund is expected to be operational by the end of 2006.

21. The COMESA Summit of 2005 also adopted the recommendations of the Committee of Central Bank Governors that the establishment of the Monetary Union be fast tracked to be attained at an earlier date than earlier envisaged. The Study on Fast Tracking the Monetary Union is ongoing and the results will be considered by the next Summit of COMESA to be held in November 2006. The study is taking account of the experiences of other African regional groupings such as ECOWAS and UEMOA.

22. At the recent Ministerial Meeting between COMESA and the US held in June 2006, the two parties have agreed to consolidate the existing arrangements based on the Trade Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA) between COMESA and the USA signed in 2001. The TIFA also enables COMESA to advocate for increased market access under AGOA.

23. COMESA has also consolidated harmonization activities with SADC and the EAC in the area of Air Transport Competition Regulations. The three REC's are in the process of establishing a Joint Air Transport Regulation Board on the basis of the Joint Competition Regulations adopted by the three REC's in 2004. COMESA and SADC are planning to continue the task force meetings for harmonization of various programmes in transport and trade.

24. COMESA is also proceeding with the programme on Gender Mainstreaming. The next meeting of the Ministers responsible for Gender will also set new targets for Gender Mainstreaming in all sectors.

25. Finally COMESA supports the initiatives of the sister institutions SADC and IGAD on peace and security. Currently, COMESA involves the Parliamentarians and Civil Society in the programme on peace and security.

C. EAC

26. EAC operates on the basis of 5-year Development Strategies. The first Development Strategy (1997-2000) focused on putting in place confidence building measures which addressed concerns over the experience of the break-up of the old EAC. The key achievement was the successful negotiation and subsequent signing of the Treaty for the

Establishment of the EAC in November 1999. The second EAC Development Strategy (2001-2005) focused on the harmonization of policies and setting up of institutions to pave the way for the establishment of the EAC Customs Union. The EAC Customs Union became operational in January 2005.

27. The third EAC Development Strategy (2006-2010) is in the final stages of formulation with consultations taking place at national level. The Strategy will, among other things, focus on:

- consolidation of the EAC Customs Union;
- negotiations for the EAC Common Market
- enhancing supply capacities in the production sectors such as Agriculture, Industry, Tourism, etc;
- enhancing the participation of the private sector in regional integration initiatives;
- enhancing collaboration with development partners and regional/international organizations who share common objectives with EAC;
- enhancing the visibility of the EAC through information dissemination and an elaborate outreach programme.

28. The process of enlarging EAC has commenced with the initiation of high-level negotiations for the admission of Burundi and Rwanda into EAC.

29. The Summit of Heads of State undertook a broad review of the status of implementation of the EAC integration in August 2004 and resolved to speed up the process with a view to achieving the ultimate goal of the Political Federation through a fast-track mechanism. To this end, the Summit agreed and subsequently made appointments of:

- Ministers solely responsible for EAC affairs; and
- a Deputy Secretary-General to oversee the process of fast tracking the Political Federation.

30. In the meantime, national consultations on the proposed road map for fast-tracking the Political Federation have begun; the outcome of which will be considered by the Heads of State at their next Extra-Ordinary Summit Meeting.

D. ECCAS

Trade liberalization (Free Trade Area / Customs Union)

31. ECCAS Free Trade Area was established since July 2004, for a period of four years with a view to put in place a custom union with a common external tariff by the year 2008.

Free movement of people

32. Decisions on free movement of a certain category of people have been completed by a convention on judiciary cooperation and assistance. This convention has been recently adopted by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Ministers of Justice and Ministers of Home Affairs. It will be submitted to the next Assembly of Heads of States and Government scheduled to take place this year. This will complete the measures required for the launching of an effective Free Movement of People by January 2007.

Infrastructure development

33. In transport and communications, ECCAS has developed a flexible, inclusive and dynamic master plan as well as priority plan which have been integrated in NEPAD short term plan on transport. As energy is concerned, a central Africa power pool has been developed and established in Brazzaville and a study is being currently conducted in the interconnection of the national power networks of the Member states.

Other Initiatives

34. The following initiatives have been carried out:
- Establishment of Central African Parliamentarians Network;
 - Gender mainstreaming;
 - Combating HIV/AIDS;
 - Establishment of a Community Levy.

E. ECOWAS

Free movement of goods and persons

35. The Free Movement of Persons, Right of Residence and Establishment as implemented in ECOWAS today allows Community citizens to move throughout the Region freely without visa. All that is needed is the Laissez Passer document and the Yellow Card. ECOWAS is gradually phasing this out for a Common ECOWAS Passport which is presently circulating side by side with the Laissez Passer and the national

passports. In a few years, all other passports will disappear and leave only the ECOWAS Common Passport.

36. Some work is being done on a sharing-type visa whereby only one visa will be required by third-country travelers to the ECOWAS Region. On the aspect of Residency and Establishment, Citizens can enter and reside and work in any Member State as long as they are not criminals. On first entry, an automatic 90 days' authorization is given, to continue, you then get a resident permit which is only a letter acknowledging your application to stay on.

Free trade area/Customs union

37. Some goods produced from the ECOWAS Region are already circulating free of duty or hindrances under the ECOWAS Trade Liberalization Scheme which is the preliminary phase to the total elimination of duties on Community Originating Products expected to come into effect from 2008. ECOWAS countries are also heading properly towards a Customs Union as more countries have lowered their tariffs and adopted a Common External Tariff of four bands – 0%, 5%, 10% and 20%. All countries are expected to adopt this tariff level by end of 2007 to activate the Customs Union in January 2008.

Monetary cooperation – single currency

38. The Monetary Cooperation in ECOWAS envisages a common currency, common central bank, common monetary policy, etc. This programme was fast tracked some years back (1999) when the Authority decided to establish the West African Monetary Zone(WAMZ) of non-CFA countries (Nigeria, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Guinea and Gambia; Liberia is observing due to its earlier conflict situation) which are now expected to adopt a common currency, etc. among themselves for eventual merger with the CFA zone to adopt the common monetary scenario.

39. As at now, the institutions to drive the WAMZ are being established and Member States are working to achieve the convergence criteria which is to level and stabilize their economies to allow for a strong and credible monetary zone. At the last meeting of the WAMZ Summit in 2005, it was decided that Member States and the WAMZ institutions should work up to 2009 when the programme will be evaluated and further decisions made on the next line of action.

40. There is also a region-wide multilateral surveillance mechanism in ECOWAS and convergence criteria – macro-economic, which allows all ECOWAS countries to organize their economies towards the adoption of the Common Monetary Policies.

Private sector development

41. The Authority of ECOWAS Heads of State and Government in 1999 approved a new structure for the ECOWAS Executive Secretariat to include a division solely for Investment and Private Sector Promotion. In the new Commission structure approved by the Authority for the ECOWAS Secretariat this month (June 2006), this Division has been upgraded to a Department under the Economic Policy Commission. This restructuring to strengthen the function is in appreciation of the fact that it is the private sector that will drive our economies and create wealth and therefore needs proper attention.

Institution building

42. The ECOWAS Executive Secretariat has been transformed into a Commission with a President, Vice-President and Seven (7) Commissioners responsible for clusters of Departments. This is to commence in January 2007. Other institutions are: the Court of Justice, Parliament, ECOWAS Bank for Investment and Development, and the West African Health Organization, are currently also being restructured to enable them focus better on their mandates.

Peace and security

43. West Africa is more peaceful in 2005-2006 than it was before then. Elections were successfully organized in Liberia and a new president has been sworn in. The challenges in Côte d'Ivoire are being confronted with the assistance of partners. Several institutions/mechanisms have been set up to identify problem spots early and to deal with them before they escalate. As of today, there is relative and productive peace and security in the region.

Infrastructure development

44. ECOWAS recognizes the fact of infrastructural development is the backbone of the economy and has been pursuing the relevant elements. The studies for the regional railway line are almost completed, the West African Gas Pipeline Programme and the Power Pool are on course, a group of experts has been set up to work on a regional airline programme, we are seeking funding for the trans-costal and trans-Saharan and interconnecting road networks etc.

F. IGAD

45. IGAD has many projects and programmes aimed at regional economic integration, in all the IGAD priority areas, namely,

- food security and environment
- economic cooperation and social developments, and
- peace and security

46. IGAD Member States are addressing common development problems more effectively through joint and development endeavours. The approach is enshrined in the IGAD strategy currently under implementation. This approach adds value to Member States development efforts by focusing on policy interventions and projects of trans-bounding nature with regional relevance. Attainment of these goals is sought through regional cooperation and sectoral policy co-ordination.

47. IGAD has established specialized institutions including the Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism (CEWARN), IGAD Business Forum, the IGAD – NGO / CSO, East Africa Standby Brigade (EASBRIG) and the IGAD Climate Prediction and Application Centre for Monitoring and Forecasting (ICPAC), among others, as well as co-ordination mechanisms with other regional economic grouping, ie COMESA, EAC, and IOC under the auspices of the Inter-Regional Co-ordination Committee (IRCC).

G. SADC

48. SADC programmes of Regional Cooperation and Integration are based on the Regional Indicative Development Plan (RISDP) and the Strategic Indicative Plan of the Organ (SIPO).

49. RISDP and SIPO are long-term development strategies that realign the priorities, articulates the policies and strategy and sets the main milestones and targets for achieving SADC overarching objectives of poverty eradication and achieving sustainable development. The main priority intervention areas of regional cooperation and integration in SADC include:

- Policy Defense and Security as a **sine qua non** for regional integration
- Regional Integration (FTA, CU, CM)
- Free Movement of Goods and Services
- Free Movement of Capital and Labour
- Macroeconomic Convergence
- Monetary Integration
- Infrastructure and Services

- Transport and Communications
- ICT
- Water
- Energy
- Tourism
- Food Security
- Social and Human Development / HIV-AIDS

Cross-cutting areas of Regional Cooperation and Integration

- Gender Development
- ICT
- Science and Technology
- Sustainable Environment
- Private Sector Development

H. ADB

50. ADB has implemented key initiatives to foster the integration of the Continent mainly in infrastructure development. The Bank has created a Vice Presidency for infrastructure, private sector and regional integration. Within the Vice Presidency, a Department for NEPAD, Regional integration and trade has been created to focus on supporting integration initiatives in the Continent. The Bank, which is also hosting the Secretariat of the Infrastructure Consortium for Africa, appealed to the RECs to foster move collaboration among themselves and to the AU to accelerate the rationalization exercise.

I. UNECA

51. UNECA has elaborated a new strategic vision aiming at repositioning the Commission so as to serve Africa better. The main tenants of the vision has been developed on two pillars: (i) promoting regional integration; and (ii) meeting special needs and global challenges by African countries. Under the framework of the strategic vision, UNECA would strengthen its partnership with the AU, ADB and the RECs and also increase its technical support to the AU, RECs and Member States.

J.AFCAC

Open skies

52. AFCAC urged RECs to encourage their Member States to open up their skies to each other in the implementation of Yamoussoukro Decision to facilitate development of the transport in Africa. This will increase

connectivity between African capitals as well as the frequencies of flights within Africa and bring the travel cost down.

Cooperation with Regional Safety Oversight Organizations

53. RECs were also urged to encourage their Member States to work together in the facilitation of the aviation safety in their respective regions Africa as a whole. Maintenance of aviation safety is a cost that some countries cannot afford. Therefore, regional safety organization under each REC can facilitate a safe aviation environment through pooling of expertise, data, equipments etc.in line with the recommendations of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO).This will ensure and fast track harmonization of regulations within the RECs.

54. After the consideration of the item, the meeting decided that:

- i.the AUC should elaborate a standard format of the RECs presentations on the status of the integration during the coordination meetings;
- ii.the AUC, Member States and RECs should take necessary measures to implement all the decisions they take.

VI. Agenda item 5: Consideration of the Report of the Fifth Meeting of the Committee of Secretariat Officials

55. The meeting considered and noted the report of the Fifth Meeting of the Committee of Secretariat Officials which took place in Banjul, The Gambia, from 24 to 25 June 2006, and took the following decisions:

1) Reporting on Implementation of decisions

An implementation matrix should be developed jointly by AUC and RECs to report on decisions taken by the Coordination committee. The matrix should include columns for decisions, what AUC is doing, What RECs are doing, progress made, timeframe and resources required.

2) AU-RECs Inter-linkage Programme

- i. The AUC should expedite the sending of technical missions to RECs in view of drawing up a framework for the standardization and harmonization of RECs website links;
- ii. Exchange of information could be enhanced by linking the web site of the AUC to those of the RECs;

3) AU facilitation and coordination role

- i. The AUC should regularly visit the RECs and RECs should also invited the AUC to their meetings in order to facilitate the coordination between the AUC and RECs;
- ii. There should be a standing agenda item on the status of integration to allow each REC to present a report at every Committee of Secretariat Officials meeting and the report should form part of the report of the AUC Chairperson to the AU Summit
- iii. The AU should include as a standing agenda item of the Executive Council a briefing of the Council by the Chief Executives of the RECs on the status of implementation of the Abuja Treaty
- iv. The Chief Executives of the RECs should be given an opportunity to brief the Executive Council on the status of implementation of the Abuja Treaty;
- v. That the integration time frame in the Abuja Treaty be reviewed taking into account the recent developments;
- vi. The AUC should be urged to expedite the resumption of the IDEP training programme on economic integration to be financed by BADEA; and
- vii. RECs should designate an African Union focal points and inform the AUC accordingly.

4) Draft Protocol on Relations between RECs and AUC

The AUC should expedite the process towards the signing of the new Protocol on Relations between the AU and the RECs after Banjul Summit. In the meantime, the existing protocol will continue to be in force.

5) Draft Protocol on Customs Cooperation

The AUC should finalize the Draft Protocol with a view to implementing the customs programmes necessary for the establishment of regional customs unions and ultimately a continental customs union.

6) Sectoral policies, projects and programmes with respect to transport, energy and telecommunications; methodological approach and status of implementation by RECs

Consideration should be taken of the need to create decent employment during the construction of infrastructure in Africa.

7) Establishment of the African Financial Institutions

Resources permitting, the AUC should expedite the establishment of these important institutions.

8) African Private Sector Forum

- i. there was need to find a way to attract regional business organizations to attend the private sector forum;
- ii. invitations to private sector could be sent through the RECs and Chambers of Commerce to mobilize them, however this does not preclude the AUC making direct invitations to some private sector actors.

9) Review of Integration Stages as Provided for under Article 6 of the Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community

The AUC should work closely with the RECs, the ECA and ADB to accelerate the review of the stages provided for under Article 6 of the Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community.

10) Coordination of activities between RECs: Sectoral Meetings, AU-RECs

The need has been reiterated to convene two coordination meetings per year.

11) Cooperation between the AU and the African Institute for Economic Development and Planning (IDEP)

The AUC should take the required measures to implement the second session of the training on economic integration devoted to the RECs secretariats, AUC staff and Member States before the end of the year or in earliest of 2007.

12) Democracy, Governance, Elections and Human rights

Elections

AUC and RECs should be involved in the whole electoral process not only during elections but also before and after these elections.

Governance

Governance in Africa should be based on the African Charter for Popular Participation (Arusha 1990).

Free Movement of People

- i. The AU should encourage and support other RECs that have not done so to adopt instruments that allow free movement of people;
- ii. Member States take the necessary measures to abolish visas for all Africans traveling in Africa as they are becoming a barrier to people right to move freely as well as to trade and do business. Abolishment of visa will increase and facilitate intra-African trade.

13) Integrated plan of action for comprehensive Africa's agriculture programme (CAADP)/Sirte declaration

- i. The AUC should work closely with RECs to expedite the strengthening of the food security, food self-sufficiency and early warning systems;
- ii. The AUC should urgently come up with an African Common position on genetically modified seed as they may have a negative impact on local seed.

14) Establishment of the focal points for the Common African Market for Agricultural Commodities

RECs are required to submit the names of their focal points to facilitate the work on the common African market for commodities.

15) Customs Directors general proposal on African integration

The proposals from the Customs Directors general should be submitted to the Ministers of Finance before consideration by the AU Executive Council

16) Coordination mechanisms with the RECs in the area of infrastructure

- i. The AUC should elaborate a matrix which will clearly specify the parties involved and RECs' strategies, and their activities in respect to infrastructure matters;
- ii. A committee should be put in place to formulate and monitor relevant infrastructure programmes;

- iii. Measures should be taken by AUC to promote African multinational enterprises for the development of infrastructure and services as such as the establishment of a Pan-African Airlines; AFCAC
- iv. The Member states should take necessary measures to finance infrastructure development from their own budget and facilitate the establishment of guarantee mechanism.

17) Report on Ouagadougou Conference of African Ministers of integration

The AUC should convene as soon as possible, once the recommendations are endorsed by the Banjul Summit, a meeting to consider the implementation framework of the report including the related costs.

18) Exchange of views on the programming of the 10th EDF, EPAs and preparation for the Brussels meeting of 11 July 2006.

The 10TH EDF

- i. AUC should provide technical and political support to Member States and RECs to prepare bankable project proposals for the programming process;
- ii. There is need to impress on the EU to remove the obstacles to the disbursement under previous EDFs;
- iii. Africa should insist that the basis for the allocation of the 10th EDF must be the ECs development plans/strategy;
- iv. The meeting noted the request by the African side for granting the AU a dedicated allocation under the 10th EDF.

EPA Negotiations

- i. The Economic Partnership Agreements should not constrain Africa's integration process and should respect the configuration of the RECs as recognized by the AU;
- ii. The negotiating groups should exchange information on the negotiations to ensure consistency on the African position such exchange of information should be encouraged and institutionalized;
- iii. The meeting urged the AUC to support the RECs in the EPA negotiation process;
- iv. European side should provide special fund to support capacity building for African countries and RECs in order to facilitate the implementation of EPAs;
- v. The EU should take necessary measures to compensate for adjustment cost due to trade liberalization; and

- vi. A working group should be set up under the aegis of the AU to reflect among other things on the EPA negotiations strategy and evaluate costs and benefits of EPAs.

19) Guidelines proposed for 10th EDF and EPAs negotiations

- i. The AUC should be present at all the EPAs negotiations between the regional economic communities (RECs) and the European Union;
- ii. The agenda for the 11 July Meeting should be agreed and adopted by EU and the RECs;
- iii. The European Union should acknowledge that the integration of the African continent should follow the form and pace set by AU member states;
- iv. The EPAs should strengthen and accelerate the integration process based on the priorities and strategies set by Africa;
- v. The principles of disbursement under 10th EDF should be guided by the spirit and letter of the Cotonou agreement.

56. The meeting exchanged views on the invitation sent by the European union Commission to the AU and the RECs to attend a meeting in Brussels on 11 July 2006 in relation with the 10th EDF as well as on the Agenda of the meeting and decided to organize concertation between the AU and the RECs to consider the Agenda, proposed if necessary agenda items and come up with a common position in the margins of the Banjul Summit.

57. The meeting noted that an item on rationalization of Recs was included in the Agenda of the Brussels meeting and stated that the issue of rationalization of RECs is an African issue and should be addressed by Africans;

VII) Agenda item 6: Any other business

58. The participation of the African Private sector, Civil Society and Diaspora in the RECs coordination meetings was raised and the meeting, while recognizing the importance of this participation, felt that the matter needs to be reflected on and discussed at the future Coordination meetings.

VIII) Adoption of the Report

59. The meeting adopted its report with amendments

IX) Date and Venue of the next meeting

60. The date and venue and the venue of the next meeting will be decided after consultations between the AU and the RECs.

X) Closing

61. H. E. Dr Maxwell Mkwezalamba, the AU Commissioner for Economic Affairs thanked the participants for the kindness and the frankness of their deliberations as well as the friendly atmosphere in which exchanges have been made and which was a sign of dedication to the integration of our continent which, he hoped, will be eased by the commitments and the determination of all the stakeholders, especially the AU and the RECs, to work hand in hand for the development of the African Continent.