BRIEFING NOTE ON THE OUTCOMES OF THE FOURTEENTH AFRICAN UNION SUMMIT: 25 JANUARY – 2 FEBRUARY 2010

The fourteenth African Union (AU) Summit took place from 25 January to 2 February 2010 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The Summit included sessions of the Permanent Representatives Committee (held from 25-26 January), the Executive Council (28-29 January), and the AU Assembly (31 January – 2 February). The main theme of the Summit was "Information and Communications Technologies (ICT) in Africa: Challenges and Prospects for Development."

The Permanent Representatives Committee (PRC) considered a range of issues and draft decisions, including a Report on the Preparations for the First Meeting of the Ministers of Meteorology in Africa, that were subsequently taken up by the Council and Assembly. At the close of its fourteenth Ordinary Session, the AU Executive Council adopted 35 decisions on a variety of topics, including the report of the Second African Union Conference of Ministers Responsible for Hydrocarbons. The fourteenth Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government agreed on 21 decisions, two resolutions and three declarations, including the Addis Ababa Declaration on Information and Communication Technologies in Africa: Challenges and Prospects for Development.

This Briefing Note from IISD Reporting Services' African Regional Coverage (ARC) initiative summarizes the decisions and declarations agreed by the Executive Council and Assembly as they relate to sustainable development and the environment.

Editor's Note: IISD Reporting Services was not physically present at the AU Summit, and this Briefing Note was prepared based on the recently-released decisions and declarations adopted at the Summit.

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 of the OAU/ fourth Ordinary Session of the African Economic Community held from 10-12 July 2000 in Lomé, 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 policy positions; 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 Committees on Industry, Science and Technology, Energy, Natural Resources and Environment. The current AU Chair is Bingu Wa Mutharika, President of the Republic of Malawi.

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 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 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 PRC 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 Chair and Deputy Chair of the AUC 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 FOURTEENTH AU SUMMIT

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

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

DECISION ON THE REPORT OF THE SECOND AFRICAN UNION CONFERENCE OF MINISTERS RESPONSIBLE FOR HYDROCARBONS (OIL & GAS): In its decision (EX.CL/563(XVI)), the Executive Council took note of the Report of the second AU Conference of Ministers Responsible for Hydrocarbons, further taking note of the joint studies undertaken by the Commission and the African Development Bank (AfDB) on the impact of high oil prices on African economies and the operational modalities for establishing the African Petroleum Fund. The Council endorsed the Declaration and Roadmap on the operationalization of the African Petroleum Fund. The Council further decided that contributions of member states and oil companies to the Fund should be voluntary, and called on bilateral and multilateral development partners, as well as other institutions, to contribute to the Fund.

DECISION ON THE SEVENTH SESSION OF THE AFRICAN POPULATION COMMISSION: The Executive Council took note of the Report (EX.CL/557(XVI)) of the Seventh Session of the African Population Commission (APC). The Council welcomed the launch of the third edition of the State of African Population Report 2008 under the theme "Population Dynamics and Climate Change: Implications for Africa's Sustainable Development," and called on member states, in collaboration with relevant partners, to mainstream population dynamics and climate change into national development programmes. The Council also requested the Commission to follow up on the implementation of recommendations at the APC's Seventh Session.

DECISION ON THE REPORT OF THE SECOND KOREA-AFRICA FORUM: In its decision (EX.CL/544(XVI)), the Executive Council took note of and endorsed the decisions contained in the Report of the Commission on the Second Korea-Africa Forum, including the Seoul Declaration, the Framework for Korea-Africa Development Cooperation 2009-2012, and the Korea-Africa Green Growth Initiative 2009-2012. Recommendations include:
· expanding bilateral and multilateral channels for dialogue between Korea and Africa to build consensus on green growth;
· sharing of policies and strategies to strengthening capacity;
· cooperating in exploring CDM projects; and
· expand projects for exchange and cooperation on policies and technologies in areas of water supply, sewerage, waste treatment and air pollution.

The Council requested that the PRC, through its Sub-Committee on Multilateral Cooperation, work with the Commission to implement the outcomes of the Forum and further requested the Commission takes steps in collaboration with Member States to implement the outcomes as appropriate.

AU ASSEMBLY

This section of the report summarizes the decisions, declarations and resolutions of the Assembly as they relate to the environment and sustainable development.

DECISION ON THE FIFTEENTH CONFERENCE OF PARTIES TO THE UNITED NATIONS FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE (UNFCCC COP 15): In its decision (Assembly/AU/Dec.218 (XIV)), the Assembly took note of the report of Ethiopia's Prime Minister Meles Zenawi, the Coordinator of the Conference of African Heads of State and Government on Climate Change (CAHOSCC) on the outcomes of UNFCCC COP 15. The Assembly endorsed the provisions of the Copenhagen Accord and encouraged member states to make individual submissions to the UNFCCC Secretariat supporting the Accord in the context of common but differentiated responsibilities. The Assembly reaffirmed its stand to remain united at all future negotiations on climate change and endorsed the leadership of Meles Zenawi as coordinator of the CAHOSCC for the next two COPs in Mexico and South Africa. The Assembly requested the CAHOSCC to establish a streamlined single negotiating structure at the ministerial and expert levels to replace the current mechanism and, additionally, to hold a post-COP 15 meeting before the next round of UNFCCC climate talks in Bonn, Germany. The Assembly further requested the chairperson of the AU Commission to register the AU as a party to the UNFCCC.

DECISION ON THE REPORT OF HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE ON THE NEW PARTNERSHIP FOR AFRICA'S DEVELOPMENT (NEPAD): The Assembly welcomed the progress made in implementing the NEPAD programme (Assembly/AU/Dec.282 (XIV)), particularly on the AU/NEPAD Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) through the signing of the CAADP Compacts and finalizing the NEPAD Capacity Development Strategic Framework (CDSF) as a common reference and integrated tool to address capacity challenges in Africa.

Recalling the decision (Assembly/AU/Dec.24(XII)) on the need for a coherent, systemized and institutionalized partnership engagement with the G8, the Assembly noted the outcomes of the L'Aquila G8/Africa Outreach of July 2009, including the launch

of the L'Aquila Food Security Initiative. The Assembly observed that the evolving global context with respect to the G8 and G20 has necessitated an in-depth review of Africa's partnership strategy within the new global governance architecture, noting that the G8 has established an accountability mechanism on the continent, and agreeing that Africa should undertake an independent assessment of the G8/Africa. The Assembly requested that the AUC and NEPAD Secretariat, in collaboration with the African Development Forum, undertake this assessment and submit its findings to the June 2010 G8 Summit. The Assembly also urged adopting a new strategic approach focusing on partnership dialogue regarding Africa's development policy issues. It further called for institutionalizing Africa's engagement with the G20, and a paradigm shift from managing poverty to economic transformation for Africa to emerge as a new "growth pole" to address existing imbalances and play a significant role in the integrated world economy.

DECISION ON THE INTEGRATION OF NEPAD INTO THE STRUCTURES AND PROCESSES OF THE AU, INCLUDING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE NEPAD PLANNING AND COORDINATING AGENCY (NPCA): The Assembly recalled and reaffirmed the Decision of the Second Session of the Assembly in Maputo in July 2003, the 13 Point Conclusions of the Algiers NEPAD Brainstorming Meeting in July 2007 as endorsed by the Tenth Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly, and the outcomes of the Dakar NEPAD Review Summit in April 2008, as the basis for integrating NEPAD into the structures and processes of the AU (Assembly/AU/Dec.283(XIV)). The Assembly further recalled the adoption of NEPAD as a programme of the AU by the thirty-seventh Ordinary Session of the Assembly by the then Organization of African Unity, and reiterated that the NEPAD vision and programme remains an intrinsic part of the AU. The Assembly noted the key recommendations contained in the consultancy-study report on the AU/NEPAD Integration commissioned in December 2008 and the similarity of the views of the Commission and the NEPAD Secretariat on the recommendations, as well as broad consultations with various African stakeholders.

The Assembly approved the establishment of the NPCA as a technical body of the AU to replace the NEPAD Secretariat. The NPCA's mandate is to: facilitate and coordinate the implementation of continental and regional priority programmes and projects; mobilize resources and partners in support of implementing Africa's priority programmes and projects; conduct and coordinate research and knowledge management; monitor and evaluate the implementation of programmes and projects; and advocate on the AU and NEPAD vision, mission and core principles/values.

The Assembly also identified the main features of the NEPAD governance structures, including the former NEPAD Heads of State and Government Implementation Committee, which will now be known as the NEPAD Heads of State and Government Orientation Committee (HGSOC). The Assembly indicated that HGSOC is a sub-committee of the AU Assembly, providing political leadership and strategic guidance on the NEPAD Programme and reporting it recommendations to the AU. It clarified that HGSOC is the "essence and spirit" of NEPAD with the lead function of high-level coordination of the NEPAD priority sectors, and indicated that there would be an intermediary body to interface between the HGSOC and the NPCA, consisting of the NEPAD Steering Committee. Finally, the Assembly highlighted that the Chairperson of the Commission

exercises supervisory authority over the NPCA, while giving it the flexibility to carry out its mandate and thereby maintain the corporate brand identity of the NEPAD Programme within the AU.

On financial matters, the Assembly noted that the financing of the NPCA and its programmatic activities will be derived from the established budget from the statutory sources of the AU Commission, voluntary contributions by AU Member States, and additional budgetary support from development partners and the private sector.

The Assembly urged the early conclusion of the Host Agreement for the NPCA between South Africa and the Commission, and noted that the Chairpersons of the HGSOC and the Commission should mandate the Chief Executive Officer of NEPAD to work out modalities and a roadmap for effective and smooth take-off and functioning of the new NEPAD Agency in collaboration with the Commission by the next ordinary session of the Assembly in July 2010.

DECISION ON THE RESPONSE TO THE GLOBAL FINANCIAL AND ECONOMIC CRISIS: The Assembly, taking note of the report on initiatives and responses to the global financial and economic crisis by international financial institutions, development banks, and African countries, commended the role played by the Commission, the AfDB and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) in advocating Africa's position regarding the crisis in different international fora (Assembly/AU/Dec.284(XIV)). The Assembly expressed concern about the impact of the crisis on African countries and commended efforts made by others to mitigate these impacts. Welcoming the outcome of the G20 Summit that took place in Pittsburgh from 24-25 September 2009, including outputs on regional African integration and increasing the policy space for climate change, the Assembly called on developed countries and international financial institutions to implement the recommendations and commitments from the G20 Summit as a matter of urgency.

Recalling the necessity for African countries to attain the Millennium Development Goals by 2015, the Assembly called for strong and timely replenishment of facilities to support low-income countries, and requested the Commission to collaborate with the AfDB and UNECA to monitor the impact of the crisis on African countries and the implementation of the G20 Summit commitments.

RESOLUTION ON SOLAR ENERGY IN THE SAHARA: The Assembly considered the development of solar energy, noting that tends to be a substitute for thermal energy. Discussions also addressed concerns regarding nuclear energy, the limitless supply of solar energy in the Sahara, the increasing development of solar power stations in the region by developed countries, and the lack of competition for access to solar energy amongst energy suppliers on the continent, which will have a negative economic impact on the continent. The Assembly approved a resolution (Assembly/AU/Res.2(XIV)) requesting all countries with the Sahara in their territories to consider the solar energy potential in this part of Africa as an asset that should be managed for the benefit of the continent. The Assembly requested the Commission to conduct a study on the solar energy issue at the technical experts' level, and to report to the Assembly at its Ordinary Session in January 2011 through the Executive Council and PRC on the financial implications for the implementation of this resolution.