

AFRICAN UNION

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**FIRST ORDINARY SESSION OF THE SPECIALIZED TECHNICAL
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WORKING PAPER ON Youth For Political Reformation

WE, the Heads of State and Government of the African Union, assembled on 16 May 2026, 1st Ordinary Session of the Specialized Technical Committee (STC) on STC 2: Finance, Economic Planning & Integration, Youth-Led Economic Transformation and Innovation for Regional Integration under AfCFTA, Sophia University in Japan;

Agenda 1: Free and Integrated Market of Africa

Recognizing that the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) presents a historic opportunity for economic integration, intra-African trade expansion, and youth-driven industrial growth across the continent,

Concerned that regulatory fragmentation, limited transportation infrastructure, and inefficient border procedures continue to hinder the movement of people, goods, services, and capital across African states,

Acknowledging that African youth entrepreneurs and informal sector workers remain disproportionately affected by limited access to cross-border trade opportunities and financial systems,

Recalling Agenda 2063's vision of "An Integrated Continent, Politically United and Based on the Ideals of Pan-Africanism and the Vision of Africa's Renaissance",

Further recognizing the importance of digital innovation and strategic international partnerships in accelerating regional economic cooperation and market accessibility,

1. **Encourages** Member States to establish youth facilitation passes for cross-border businesses and intra-African trade activities to simplify mobility for young entrepreneurs and innovators;
2. **Recommends** the establishment of an “AfCFTA Youth Innovation Corridor” to connect youth-led start-ups, incubators, trade hubs, and investment opportunities across African regions;
3. **Calls upon** Member States to harmonize trade regulations, customs systems, and transaction procedures to reduce barriers to continental commerce;
4. **Supports** the development of a Japan-Africa Digital Trade Platform to strengthen e-commerce cooperation, investment exchange, and digital entrepreneurship between African states and Japanese partners;
5. **Encourages** long-term discussions on the gradual unification and interoperability of African digital payment and currency systems to facilitate continental transactions;
6. **Requests** the establishment of integrated transit systems connecting landlocked countries with port-access states to improve logistical efficiency and regional connectivity;
7. **Recommends** simplifying entrepreneurship and innovation visa procedures for designated cross-border business projects and youth-led enterprises;
8. **Further encourages** the digitization of trade procedures, including customs clearance, certification systems, and border administration;
9. **Calls for** the regulated and transparent movement of goods and merchandise across African borders under AfCFTA frameworks;
10. **Supports** continental investment in transportation infrastructure, including roads, railways, and smart logistics systems necessary for regional trade integration;
11. **Encourages** the African Union Commission and Afreximbank to collaborate on financing mechanisms that support youth-led regional trade initiatives and infrastructure development.

Agenda 2: Agriculture and Food Security Financing

Recognizing that agriculture remains one of the largest sectors of employment across Africa and a critical foundation for food security, economic resilience, and rural development,

Concerned that insufficient mechanization, limited access to agricultural information, and underinvestment continue to constrain productivity and sustainability in the agricultural sector,

Acknowledging the importance of youth participation in agricultural innovation and agribusiness development for the future of the continent,

Recalling the commitments of the Malabo Declaration on Accelerated Agricultural Growth and Transformation for Shared Prosperity and Improved Livelihoods,

1. **Encourages** Member States to expand digital access for agricultural practitioners through affordable internet connectivity, government-supported devices, and agricultural education platforms;
2. **Calls upon** governments and regional institutions to increase investment in agricultural machinery, irrigation systems, and modern farming technologies;
3. **Supports** the establishment of continental and regional agricultural innovation competitions aimed at empowering youth agripreneurs and encouraging knowledge-sharing;
4. **Recommends** the creation of an AU-supported continental digital agricultural platform for sharing research, market information, climate adaptation strategies, and farming techniques;

5. **Encourages** Member States to establish open-access agricultural libraries and regional information-sharing systems for farmers and agricultural researchers;
6. **Promotes** practical agricultural education programs within school systems, integrating entrepreneurship, sustainability, and technical agricultural skills;
7. **Calls upon** African financial institutions and development partners to expand accessible financing mechanisms for small-scale farmers and youth-led agricultural enterprises;
8. **Supports** regional cooperation in agricultural supply chains, food storage systems, and transport infrastructure to strengthen food security across the continent.

Agenda 3: Digital Innovation and Youth Entrepreneurship

Acknowledging that digital transformation, artificial intelligence, and technological innovation are increasingly shaping the global economy and future labor markets,

Concerned that many African youth continue to face limited access to funding, digital infrastructure, and practical technological training,

Recognizing the potential of African youth to become global leaders in entrepreneurship, innovation, and digital services if adequate support systems are established,

Guided by Agenda 2063 and the African Union Digital Transformation Strategy 2020–2030,

1. **Encourages** governments to establish youth start-up funding mechanisms that provide grants, low-interest financing, and mentorship opportunities for innovative young entrepreneurs;
2. **Recommends** integrating vocational, technical, and skills-based education into national education systems to better prepare students for evolving labor markets and technological industries;
3. **Supports** the establishment of regional technology hubs and innovation incubation centers to provide workspaces, competitions, mentorship, and networking opportunities for young innovators;
4. **Calls for** the development of a Pan-African e-commerce platform to enable African youth entrepreneurs to market, buy, and sell products across the continent;
5. **Encourages** the establishment of an African online talent hub connecting businesses, organizations, freelancers, and specialized youth professionals throughout Africa;
6. **Recommends** the creation of multilingual digital skill-sharing platforms to facilitate education, communication, and business collaboration across Africa’s linguistic communities;
7. **Supports** the establishment of AU regional AI factories and data centers to promote African-led artificial intelligence research, technological independence, and digital infrastructure development;
8. **Calls upon** Member States and financial institutions to support the implementation of a Pan-African digitized payment system to facilitate secure and efficient transactions;
9. **Encourages** partnerships between African governments, universities, private-sector actors, and international partners to expand digital literacy and technological innovation programs;
10. **Recommends** prioritizing youth and women from marginalized and rural communities in digital inclusion initiatives and entrepreneurship support mechanisms.

Agenda 4: Economic Independence, Informal Sector Integration, and Debt Reform

Concerned that excessive debt dependency, unequal global financial structures, and underdeveloped domestic industries continue to undermine Africa's long-term economic sovereignty,

Recognizing that the informal sector accounts for a substantial proportion of employment across Africa and remains essential to local economies and livelihoods,

Acknowledging that many informal sector workers lack access to credit systems due to limited collateral, formal documentation, and financial inclusion mechanisms,

Further recognizing the importance of strengthening African financial institutions, industrial processing capacity, and continental cooperation in achieving economic self-reliance,

1. **Encourages** the establishment of independent assessment structures to evaluate the eligibility of informal sector traders and small businesses for financing and investment support;
2. **Calls upon** Member States to promote fair and transparent taxation systems while protecting vulnerable small-scale traders from excessive financial burdens;
3. **Recommends** the creation of digital business identification systems and long-term development of interoperable continental digital identification frameworks;
4. **Supports** the development of continental platforms that enable informal sector business owners and entrepreneurs to exchange ideas, strategies, and opportunities;
5. **Encourages** African states to increase regional mineral processing and industrial manufacturing capacities within the continent to reduce dependency on external processing industries;
6. **Calls for** strengthened regional cooperation in the exchange, processing, and value addition of strategic minerals and natural resources;
7. **Recommends** the expansion of refinery and industrial processing infrastructure across Africa to promote industrialization and export diversification;
8. **Encourages** African countries to prioritize mutually beneficial investment agreements that promote sustainable development rather than perpetuating debt dependency;
9. **Calls upon** national financial regulators and multilateral institutions to improve transparency in lending systems and simplify financial agreements for citizens and local enterprises;
10. **Supports** discussions regarding the establishment of a Pan-African financial institution capable of financing continental infrastructure, industrialization, and development priorities;
11. **Recommends** the harmonization of fiscal and macroeconomic policies across African regional blocs in order to strengthen economic coordination and financial stability;
12. **Encourages** responsible borrowing frameworks and debt sustainability measures among Member States;
13. **Calls for** increased continental solidarity and financial cooperation with African countries facing economic sanctions or severe financial crises.