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**FIRST ORDINARY SESSION OF THE SPECIALIZED
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**WORKING PAPER ON Youth Driven Digital And Ai Innovation For
Sustainable Development**

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 3: Education,
Science and Technology

Acknowledging the objectives of the AU Agenda 2063 in promoting inclusive growth,
technological advancement and youth empowerment across the continent is still a problem in
many AU Member states,

Recalling the adoption of the Constitutive Act of the African Union by the Thirty- sixth
Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government held in Lome, Togo
from 10 to 12 July 2001, as subsequently ratified by two thirds of Member States,

Acknowledging the importance of apparently being able STEM education in preparing youth
for emerging sectors such as artificial intelligence (AI), satellite technologies,
telecommunications, logistics and digital trade,

Reaffirming the principles of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) in promoting regional economic integration and digital trade cooperation.

Bearing in mind Agenda 2063 and mindful of the determination of Africans to eradicate poverty and to commit their countries, individually and collectively, to sustainable growth and development, while taking an active part in the world economy and in decision-making fora,

Taking into account its geographic location, bilingual use of English and French, and strong academic institutions;

Deeply concerned that many African states continue to face significant gaps in digital infrastructure, limiting equitable access to technology and innovation,

Concerned by the prohibitive cost of digital connectivity and systemic infrastructure gaps that prevent African youth from transitioning from passive technology consumers to active solution designers,

Noting the mismatch between traditional education systems and rapidly evolving labour market demands in the digital economy,

Taking into account the role of public-private partnerships in accelerating innovation and infrastructure development across member states,

Recognizing the importance of satellite monitoring, AI-driven data infrastructure, and regional information-sharing mechanisms in strengthening accountability, documenting atrocities, and supporting conflict detection in conflict-affected regions,

Recognizing that youth represent the majority of Africa's population and are central to achieving sustainable digital transformation,

Emphasizing the importance of ethical governance frameworks to ensure the responsible development and deployment of artificial intelligence technologies and infrastructure,

Agenda 1: Continental framework for youth-driven digital and AI innovation for sustainable AU development

Operative Clauses:

1. **Establishes** the framework of youth advisory councils within relevant ministries to

ensure structured youth participation in national digital policy development for the purposes of training human resources to participate in establishing AI Innovation hubs, Teaching hubs and Economic hubs;

2. **Establishing** the application to the Teaching Hubs is working through the system of grants, meaning that the education and transportation costs would be paid by the Parties.
3. **Encourages** collaboration with domestic and international development partners to support funding, technical assistance and capacity building initiatives for youth-led digital innovation;
4. **Supports** the creation of youth-driven AI Innovation Hubs and development of AI ethics and governance frameworks in alignment with AU standards to ensure responsible, transparent and secure use of AI;
5. **Supports** investment in sustainable and solar-powered ICT and energy infrastructure for schools, vocational institutions, innovation hubs, community learning centres, and digital villages to address electricity limitations affecting digital participation and educational access across Africa;
6. **Recommends** increased investment in national and regional digital infrastructure, including broadband expansion, data connectivity systems and secure telecommunications networks;
7. **Encourages** member States to promote public-private partnerships in the development of digital ecosystems, including economic hubs, startup incubators, innovation labs and technology accelerators;
8. **Encourages** subsidies to the businesses that would provide mentorship in terms of the Teaching Hubs in both rural areas and urban centres;
9. **Recommends** the expansion of AU's digital literacy programs targeting rural and underserved communities to reduce the digital divide across Member States;
10. **Calls for** the strengthening of satellite monitoring, AI-driven data infrastructure, and regional information-sharing mechanisms to improve accountability, document atrocities, and support early conflict detection in conflict-affected regions;
11. **Calls for** enhanced regional cooperation under AfCFTA to facilitate cross-border digital trade, data interoperability and youth participation in continental markets;
12. **Approves** international technology conglomerates and manufacturing firms to extract critical mineral from the Member States to reinvest a mandatory 5% of localized resource revenue into the continental Regional Digital Infrastructure Fund (RDIF) to

directly finance rural data networks and clean sustainable grids;

Agenda 2: Strengthening digital education and youth innovation through regional learning hubs in Africa

Operative Clauses:

1. **Encourages** the establishment of Regional Learning Hubs across the 5 subregions of Africa, with the following 3 educational models:
 - a. Teacher training programme
 - i. **Urges** teachers from rural communities to acquire training in digital skills, trained by certified graduates of local prestigious universities or returnees among the diaspora, enabling them to return to their local schools and communities.
 - ii. **Encourages** the curriculum to be decided by each hub, while conforming to international educational standards.
 - b. Youth innovation programme
 - i. **Calls for the** provision of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) students, and university students with advanced instruction in AI, startup development, followed by internships and mentorship opportunities targeting high school students;
 - ii. **Encourages** the provision of opportunities targeting elementary and middle school students to visit the hubs and learn about career paths.
 - c. Early digital literacy camps
 - i. **Encourages** the implementation of 2-week introductory camps for primary school students (aged 6-12) to develop foundational digital skills. Students will have the opportunity to visit their regional hub, observe and engage with their seniors to increase interest in AI from an early age.
 - ii. **Recommends** that admission prioritize youth from rural communities, with basic literacy in a selected hub language and mathematics, and adequate motivation.
 - iii. **Calls for** the creation of multilingual educational material appropriate for each subregion. Graduates and teachers will be encouraged to adapt their teaching content into more local languages to promote broader inclusion.

- iv. **Supports** the expansion of online learning and hybrid education models, inspired by initiatives such as Gabon’s connected schools program to ensure that rural high school and university students have access to high-quality digital education.
- v. **Ensures** learning hubs are created for the benefit of all member states, and for training our youth to develop the continent, the initiative will be entirely free for them, with the following funding procedures:
 - a. A joint investment fund, mandating that AU member states allocate a specific percentage of their GDP solely for this initiative. Cooperation from all countries is required. A special fund will be created to address the initiative.
 - 1. Through partnerships with international organisations, telecommunication companies and across diverse sectors, we expect material contributions (devices, internet), human resources (teachers, trainers). This will ensure the sustainability of the program in the long term and long-lasting economic stability.
- 2. **Encourages** all participating states to ensure that the implementation is smooth and universal, to help our youth be the actors for the changes we want to see on our continent, in the field of AI and technology transformation.