

## Conclusions on ICT

Both Europe and Africa should be able to reap the full dividend from the development of the digital economy, the single most important driver today for innovation, competitiveness and growth. While the EU is developing its Digital Single Market, Africa has finalized a draft framework for its Comprehensive ICT Strategy.

The AU and the EU agreed at the 2014 EU-Africa summit to collaborate along three strategic directions/axes, namely legal and regulatory approximation for the promotion of fair and transparent enabling environments, interconnection of e-infrastructures and ICT capacity building. The RG on Infrastructure examined and took note of the positive progress made to date, including the formulation of a new action framework on access to the digital dividend, the extension of the AfricaConnect project in the e-infrastructures area, the regional interconnection through the development of national and regional internet exchange points (AXIS project) and actions undertaken in the context of H2020 to strengthen research and innovation cooperation in ICT between the two continents.

The RG also examined how to strengthen cooperation:

1. To support AU Member States to modernise their spectrum allocation processes;
2. To make the multistakeholder model of internet governance truly inclusive and working for all through capacity building and sensitization initiatives at national, regional and continental levels;
3. On cybersecurity, to improve free and safe communication on-line while safeguarding human rights and data protection in order to build confidence and trust in the use of ICTs;
4. To develop digital professional skills and digital literacy, in particular among vulnerable groups and;
5. To promote digital entrepreneurship and innovation, with the aim to develop e-business services and local content on the net.
6. To support the e-transformation initiatives and programs to accelerate the realization of the aspirations of the AU Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through leveraging ICTs to transform education, health, agriculture, governance and trade activities.

The UN General assembly called in December 2015 for close alignment between the World Summit on the Information Society process and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, highlighting the contribution of ICT to the Sustainable Development Goals and poverty eradication.

The AU and EU should actively cooperate to achieve the SDG target to significantly increase access to ICT and strive to provide universal and affordable access to the Internet in least developed countries by 2020 by developing Public Private Partnerships, improve regulation and governance as well as creating adequate funding mechanisms. In the development of new Infrastructure projects in the Transport and Energy sectors, the

potential of synergies with ICT infrastructure development should be evaluated as it has been stipulated in the framework of PIDA.

Digital technologies also play a fundamental cross-cutting role in achieving goals in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the AU Agenda 2063 aspirations. ICT is a key driver of economic and societal changes. This includes citizen-oriented and pro-digital governance, sustainable and smart cities and communities, the improvement of education and health, inclusive agriculture value chain, empowerment of women, the access to finance and the reduction of transaction costs of migrant remittances. The EC and the AUC agreed to further explore on how to establish a coherent overarching strategy to streamline in the mid-term the take up of digital technologies in the financial cooperation