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AU ROADMAP ON “HARNESSING THE DEMOGRAPHIC DIVIDEND THROUGH INVESTMENTS IN YOUTH”

[In response to Assembly Decision (Assembly/AU/Dec.601 (XXVI) of January 2016 on the
2017 theme of the year]

**PROJECT 2017: AU ROADMAP ON “HARNESSING THE DEMOGRAPHIC DIVIDEND
THROUGH INVESTMENTS IN YOUTH”**

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1. Introduction

To effectively implement the Africa Union Assembly Decision (Assembly/AU/Dec.601 (XXVI) of January 2016 to devote the theme of the year 2017 to “Harnessing the Demographic Dividend through investments in Youth”, the African Heads of State and Government requested the Commission, in collaboration with the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), the African Development Bank (AfDB), the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) Coordination and Planning Agency, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), as well as other United Nations partners and development agencies to:

- i) Expedite the implementation of a continental initiative on Demographic Dividend for Africa;
- ii) Develop a roadmap with key deliverables and milestones to be submitted to the next Ordinary Session of the Assembly scheduled for July 2016 through the Executive Council, to guide Member States and the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) on concrete actions to be undertaken in 2017 and beyond.

In order to deliver on this important assignment from the Assembly, the Commission, together with the above-named institutions undertook a multi-stakeholder consultative process towards the preparation of the 2017 AU Roadmap on “Harnessing the demographic dividend through investments in youth” which reflects the inputs and aspirations of a wide range of key stakeholders.

Investments made today in the youth, who represent Africa’s greatest asset, will determine the development trajectory of Africa over the next 50 years and position the continent towards realizing the “Africa We Want”, a strong, united and influential global player and partner as envisioned in Agenda 2063.

This roadmap has therefore been developed bearing in mind the urgent necessity to transform the potential of Africa’s large youth population, often referred to as the youth bulge, into a demographic dividend and to help usher African countries towards the ambitious yet critical aspirations and goals of the complementary Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The demographic dividend can be defined as the benefit that can arise when a country has a relatively large proportion of working-age population due to declining fertility, and effectively invests in their health, empowerment, education and employment through public action and private sector involvement.

2. Background

The central importance of the demographic dividend to Africa’s transformative development has been repeatedly acknowledged by African leaders at the highest level and in key ministerial platforms. Over the last ten years, it has become evident that a demographic dividend lens offers a strategic basis for focusing and prioritizing investments in people in general and youth in particular, in order to achieve sustainable development, inclusive economic growth and to build “an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the international arena”.

The Joint Annual Meetings of the ECA Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development and AU Conference of Ministers of Economy and Finance have repeatedly underscored the importance of the demographic dividend in the development planning processes of African countries including calling for the development of a continental demographic dividend initiative in 2013 (AUC/ECA Joint Conference of Ministers Ministerial Statement) aimed at accelerating economic development on the continent.

The African Population Commission, (now known as the African Population Experts Committee) also highlighted the importance of the demographic dividend in their 6th Ordinary session in 2007; devoted the 2012 State of Africa Population Report to “Harnessing the demographic dividend for the socio-economic development of Africa” and co-convened with the African Union Commission (AUC), the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the Africa Regional Conference on Population and Development in 2013 again with harnessing the demographic dividend as the main theme. Subsequently, in January 2014, the Executive Council decision EX.CL/ Dec. 742 (XXII) called for the recognition of the demographic dividend in the continent’s development efforts.

Furthermore, the AU Agenda 2063, makes several calls for investment in youth and women in realizing its vision of “an Africa where development is people-driven, unleashing the potential of its women and youth”. Equally important is the recognition of the demographic dividend as a key element in the people-centred framework of the Common African Position on the Post 2015 Development Agenda which resulted in the inclusion of the demographic dividend in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This was one of the key contributions of Africa to the 2030 Agenda.

It is also worthy of note that many countries across Africa are already putting in place measures and policies that would help create an enabling environment and position them towards reaping the demographic dividend. The decision of the AU Heads of State and Government on the theme for 2017 comes on the back of a strong recognition and growing momentum around the demographic dividend as it presents the best path towards meeting the development objectives of the continent.

3. Context and Justification

According to the UN World Population Prospects (2015 Revision), the continent’s population reached 1.2 billion in 2015 and is projected to grow rapidly, reaching 1.7 billion in 2030 and more than double by 2050, to 2.5 billion in 2050 and 3 billion in 2063. Its share of the global population will increase from 16 percent in 2015 to more than 29 percent in 2063. More remarkable is the fact that about 46 percent of the 1.3 billion increase in Africa’s labor force over the period 2015-2063 will be young people aged 15-34, averaging 12.1 million a year.

With a fast transformation in the age structure and a decline in dependency ratios, there is a potential for economic growth spurred by the increased labor income and increased savings. This can also correlatively lead to improvements of human capital as: (i) lower fertility is usually associated with delayed age of first birth and longer spaces between births, both of which improve maternal and child health; (ii) a lower youth dependency ratio allows larger investments per child; and (iii) lower fertility increases the potential for female

employment and hence empowerment.

Given Africa's current demographic structure with a high youthful population, there is a significant potential for economic transformation. Beyond the simple increase in the number and share of working-age population, the development and implementation of sound policies in education, health, including family planning and the creation of an enabling macroeconomic environment that facilitates job creation and access to decent employment would ensure increase in the productive workforce and lead to higher growth and rising income per person. Finally, harnessing the demographic dividend presents a great opportunity to building resilience of young people and addressing the root causes of many of the key challenges facing Africa including forced migration, radicalization and violent extremism.

4. Objectives

The overall objective of the roadmap is to guide and facilitate the implementation of the theme of the year 2017 by Member states, Regional Economic Commissions (RECs) and partners through key deliverables, milestones and concrete actions as stated by the Assembly Decision (Assembly/AU/Dec. 601(XXVI)).

In particular, the roadmap spells out the necessary areas for key investments (labeled as pillars), that are needed for countries to maximize their potential to harness a demographic dividend in the decades ahead. Under each pillar, key actions and areas of investments have been defined in line with relevant and strategic AU policy instruments and frameworks to position countries towards harnessing the demographic dividend and ensuring the full implementation of both Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

5. Guiding Frameworks and Principles

a. Frameworks

To ensure a proper grounding and alignment of the roadmap with existing AU frameworks and commitments, the development of this roadmap has been guided by the Agenda 2063 and its 'First Ten-Year Implementation Plan' which together lay a strong foundation for the vision of African leaders in all facets of the continent's development especially as they relate to the thematic pillars elaborated in this roadmap. Similarly, the roadmap is guided by the Common African Position on Post 2015 Development Agenda, the Malabo Summit Declaration of 2011 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, all of which highlight the importance of the demographic dividend to people-centred and inclusive development.

Furthermore, given the importance of investments in youth towards the achievement of the demographic dividend, the African Youth Charter has been critical in the development of the roadmap. Additionally, each of the thematic areas has been guided by the relevant AU policies and frameworks at the continental level and key cross-sectoral instruments like the Addis Ababa Declaration on Population and Development beyond 2014, the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, the Continental Policy Framework on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, etc.

b. Principles and Values

In the process of preparing the roadmap, it was also very important to build and reflect on key principles and values of the African Union such as those enshrined in the OAU Charter (1963) and in the Constitutive Act of the African Union (2002). These principles and values would facilitate empowerment and the creation of an enabling environment within countries and RECs to harness and maximize the demographic dividend:

- Upholding of the principles of transparency, democracy, good governance, anti-corruption and rule of law;
- Accountability in the delivery of services and the effective performance of accountability institutions, particularly parliaments, the judiciary, and civil society organizations;
- Women and youth participation in decision-making at all levels;
- Equity and accessibility- leaving no one behind;
- Multi-sectoral approach to development;
- Human rights for all.

6. Consultative Process

In developing this roadmap, a deliberate attempt was made to consult a broad spectrum of stakeholders including young people, Ministers, African diplomats, AUC officials, experts, civil society organizations, private sector, African regional institutions, UN system etc. to ensure that the activities proposed are comprehensive, broad, innovative, result-oriented, have the ownership of all key stakeholders and are country-driven.

The Commission and partners also used virtual consultations, including social media, that provided the opportunity for various stakeholders – mainly youth - to make inputs by sending their proposals and contributions through a template that was developed for this purpose. The Commission and mandated partners (ECA, NEPAD, AfDB and UNFPA) also took advantage of several key events and platforms taking place around the continent for advocacy and outreach on Project 2017 and to solicit the inputs of various stakeholders.

These included:

- Accra Conference on “Realizing the Demographic Dividend”; Ghana, 8-12 February, 2016;
- Dialogue with African Youth and Adolescents Network (AfriYAN) on “Empowering Young People to Harness the Demographic Dividend”, Dakar, Senegal, 19 February 2016;
- African Demographic Dividend Leadership Seminar; Abuja, Nigeria 7-9 March 2016;
- Working Dinner on Initiative to Harness the Demographic Dividend with the Diplomatic Corps and partners; Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 31 March 2016;
- Meeting of Health Experts as a Working Group of Specialized Technical Committee on Health, Population and Drug Control (STC-HPDC), Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 25-26 April, 2016;
- Meeting of the United Nations Liaison Team; Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 27 April 2016;
- 5th Pan-African Summit of the Young Leaders of the United Nations (ROJALNU), Libreville, Gabon, 4-6 May, 2016;

- 26th Annual World Economic Forum on Africa; Kigali, Rwanda, 11-13 May 2016;
- African Regional Forum on Sustainable Development; Cairo, Egypt, 17-19 May 2016;
- Ministers of Health Meeting; Geneva, Switzerland, 21 May 2016;
- Banjul +10: Celebrating Ten-Years of the African Youth Charter, Banjul, Gambia, 23-25 May 2016;
- African Development Bank Annual General Meeting, Lusaka, Zambia, 23-27 May 2016;
- AU Specialized Technical Committee on Youth, Culture and Sports, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 13-17 June 2016;
- High level Symposium on Demographic Dividend and Africa's development, Dakar, Senegal, 20 June 2016.

At each of these meetings and platforms, participants and representatives of Member States had the opportunity to make concrete contributions towards the roadmap. In some instances, the participants received the roadmap template and had opportunities to consult further with their constituencies before submitting inputs and suggestions.

7. Understanding the Central Importance of Population Dynamics to Africa's Economic Transformation and Harnessing the Demographic Dividend

The demographic dividend remains central to realizing Africa's aspiration for economic transformation. It is evident that, given proper investments, population dynamics would play an important role in facilitating high and inclusive growth and poverty reduction. Indeed, the large youth population if well harnessed, would spur the continent to greater economic achievements. Africa is moving at a pace much slower than its potential due in great part to the untapped potential of its youth. The 2016 Economic Report on Africa puts the growth rate of the continent at 3.7 percent and although this masks higher performance in certain countries, economic growth has not been in areas that are labour intensive. For example, Africa spends about 30 billion US dollars importing processed foods every year and could create about 5 million jobs just by transforming natural minerals by 5 percent. The time to invest in human resource, particularly youth is now.

A set of important measures that include high stakes investments in health, particularly access to family planning, which has been noted by Agenda 2063 as among the driving forces behind the economic successes of the Asian tigers, must be put in place. Further, lowering mortality and fertility; eliminating gender inequalities that impede women's right to decide on the number and spacing of their children; improving access to quality education that is matched with labour market demands; putting in place macroeconomic measures that would facilitate job creation and entrepreneurship, including removing barriers that inhibit businesses, are all central to economic transformation. Conducting proper profiling of countries to ensure policy makers make evidence-based decisions during country development planning would therefore help to address Africa's current challenges that render young people vulnerable to fundamentalism, extremism, forced migration, etc.

These investments and policy responses are interlinked, and exploiting their synergies would be critical to increasing and maximizing the dividend in the long run.

8. Thematic Pillars

Harnessing the demographic dividend requires key actions from all aspects of development planning and nation-building. This roadmap focuses on four key interconnected pillars that are most critical to increasing investments in youth, driving change and setting African countries on the path towards harnessing the demographic dividend.

Given that country contexts differ, it is expected that the key actions proposed would serve as a guide that will be implemented based on local priorities.

Pillar 1: Employment and Entrepreneurship

African youth (15-24 years) constitute about 37% of the working age population, but account for more than 60% of all African unemployed people in Africa (AfDB, 2013). To address this high youth unemployment rates and the mismatch of qualifications in Africa, labor force participation needs to be increased by providing employment opportunities to youth in particular. With high-quality jobs predominantly provided by private sector to absorb new workforce entrants and increase overall productivity, there is a need for a paradigm change as young people should be empowered with the necessary entrepreneurial skills to enable them to create their own enterprises. As such, governments should create conducive political, business, financial and economic environment by developing and effectively implementing policies that promote flexible labor markets, facilitate the development of labor-intensive sectors that can compete globally, and liberalize trade. Governments need also to engage with Chiefs Executive Officers (CEOs), national and regional banking institutions and the private sector to enable them to contribute to the emergence of a new generation on entrepreneurs in the continent as well as in the mobilization of the necessary funding. Adequate and tailored policies on Corporate Social Responsibilities should become a norm. These measures are necessary to increase employment opportunities and productivity needed. Finally, considering that agriculture employs 60% of the labour force in Africa and accounts for 25% of the continent's GDP¹, it is extremely important that this sector is prioritized to help absorb most of the youth in Africa facing unemployment.

Key Actions and Deliverables

1. Develop and implement strategies aiming at reducing the proportion of 2013 youth unemployed by at least a quarter by 2024 (in accordance with Agenda 2063 First Ten Year Implementation Plan).
2. Improve access to credit facilities for youth and establish and operationalize national and regional Youth Funds to increase young people's access to business capital.

¹ African Economic Outlook Report, 2013

3. Engage with private sector partners to expand internships, apprenticeships and on-the-job training opportunities for women and youth.
4. Develop proper policies, incentive measures and create conducive environment for Corporate Social Responsibilities with the aim of supporting youth entrepreneurship.
5. Engage African philanthropists, Chiefs Executive Officers (CEOs) and private sector to develop and support transformative youth development initiatives towards building entrepreneurial skills and capacities of African youth.
6. Enhance access of young people to government procurement and financial services, including special considerations for youth-led businesses and measures to reduce the challenge of starting and/or doing business within and across African countries
7. Invest in sectors with high job-multiplier effects, including Information and Communications Technology (ICT), manufacturing, agriculture and agro-industries in order to generate employment and spur inclusive growth.
8. Create youth development funds at national, sub-regional (RECs) and continental level (AfDB) to support youth entrepreneurship advancement within all sectors.
9. Promote Africa youth volunteer and Junior Professional Programmes and other internship opportunities to enhance capacity and grant exposure to young Africans in regional and international organizations.

Pillar 2: Education and Skills Development

Improvements in the outcomes of education in Africa will be critical to the continent's efforts towards harnessing the demographic dividend and serves as one of the most important areas that require strategic investments. Across Africa and within various policy instruments and studies, some of the key challenges facing the educational system are well documented. These include access, quality, relevance, options for technical and vocational education and training, the need for emphasis on science and technology, the mismatch between what students learn and the demands of national development and the labour market, high cost of tuition, inadequacy of learning materials, etc. Indeed, there is a need for a skills revolution in Africa. Building on the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA 2016-25), these challenges have to be addressed in a meaningful manner that involves all the key actors and stakeholders from country to the continental level and including government, the private sector, civil society and youth.

Key Actions and Deliverables

10. Review curriculum of educational institutions to increase quality and relevance to labour market and national developmental needs, particularly through an emphasis on skills development and a greater focus on science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) through enhanced implementation of continental policies like

the Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa (STISA 2014-24); and the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA 2016-25)

11. Expand vocational training opportunities for skills acquisition for young people to enhance their employability (including self - employment), productivity and competitiveness as stated in the Continental Strategy for Technical, Vocational Education and Training. (TVET CS)
12. Improve inclusive access to education at all levels and provide viable alternatives for the many young people, particularly adolescent girls, who drop out of the formal educational system, by facilitating re-entry, revamping informal education and training through standardized certification within and between African countries.
13. Adopt a life-course approach to learning that encompasses a wide range of subjects and topics, including livelihood skills, age appropriate and culturally sensitive comprehensive education about sexual and reproductive health and address sexual harassment affecting young women in the education system.
14. Establish and strengthen regional educational institutions that create learning and exchange opportunities for students across Africa, including the gradual introduction of internship programmes from secondary up to tertiary levels.

Pillar 3: Health and Wellbeing

The importance of ensuring good health is key to reducing youth vulnerability and to maximizing human capital investment. It is also critical in speeding up the demographic transition and improving the productivity of the workforce. As such, to harness the demographic dividend, it is critical to make strategic investments that would improve health outcomes especially as relates to access to sexual and reproductive health including family planning to ensure that women can decide on the number and spacing of their children. In addition, it is critical to improve child survival by focusing on prevention of infectious diseases, immunization, improving nutrition and strengthening interventions around the neonatal period. Agenda 2063 “commits member states to integrate sexual and reproductive health and rights, family planning and HIV/AIDS services through reinforcing action on earlier commitments to enhance maternal, newborn and child health status, ensuring the integration necessary to facilitate synergies between HIV/AIDS, TB, Malaria and Maternal, Newborn and Child Health programmes”. Nevertheless, a worryingly high adolescent fertility rate and unmet need for family planning, despite the high demand for example, is one of the reasons for high fertility rates that could delay or jeopardize the harnessing of the demographic dividend. A combination of low mortality and fertility is a critical element for harnessing the demographic dividend. Whilst child mortality rates in Africa have declined, fertility rates have remained high, with a continental average of 4.7 (World Population Prospects 2015 Revision). In some African countries, the fertility rate stands as high as 7.6. These phenomena give rise to high youth dependency rates and manifest themselves in many other challenges as there are limited resources to adequately invest in the development of each individual.

Across Africa, barriers limiting young people’s access to sexual and reproductive health

information and services particularly for young girls persist. Addressing adolescent unmet need for modern contraception alone would reduce unintended pregnancies and abortions by 70 percent², along with significant reductions in maternal death and morbidities. Thus, access to family planning services, including access to modern contraceptives could be a life-saver for many women and adolescent girls. Furthermore, the high maternal and child mortality, prevalence of sexually transmitted infections, socio-cultural practices that inhibit access to health and wellbeing, particularly harmful practices such as child marriage and female genital mutilation (FGM) and the unacceptable school dropout rates due to unintended pregnancies, pose a serious threat to Africa's efforts towards harnessing the demographic dividend. This situation calls for urgent, systematic and strategic investments in health in order to facilitate harnessing of the demographic dividend. It also requires a change in socio-cultural norms, including with regards to the roles and responsibilities of women and men, boys and girls. The potential for a demographic dividend cannot be realized in the context of persistent gender discrimination and inequality, that leaves many women and girls disempowered and disenfranchised.

Key Actions and Deliverables

15. Establish and promote integrated adolescent and youth friendly health services in public and private health facilities, school clinics and other venues, with adequate services for sexual and reproductive health.
16. Prioritize national investments to ensure universal access to family planning services, including expanding the use of modern contraceptives as stated in the Extended Maputo Plan of Action on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (2016-2030) and reiterated by Article 14(g) of the Maputo Protocol on the Rights of Women.
17. Foster sustainable investments in health systems, including in human resources and infrastructure, with the goal of enhancing access to quality health services for all and guaranteeing adequate financing for the health sector in line with the Abuja commitments and address morbidities that undermine quality of life and productivity of the workforce.
18. Scale up the promotion and implementation of policies, community engagement strategies and behavioural change measures to enhance the reproductive rights of women and adolescent girls and their access to sexual and reproductive health education, information and services.
19. Promote policies and programmes to improve child survival e.g. increasing immunization coverage, integrated management of childhood illness (IMCI) and improving child nutrition among others.
20. Scale up age-appropriate and culturally sensitive comprehensive education on sexual and reproductive health³ in order to avert many complications and challenges associated with unintended pregnancies, sexually transmitted infections

² Guttmacher Institute, 2016

³ (Extended Maputo Plan of Action on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, 2016-2030), para 18v, vi.

and its consequent impact on the development and wellbeing of young people, for in and out of school youth and implement innovative behavioural change programmes using new media and technology.

21. Foster inter-sectoral action for health at all levels (state and non-state) in a manner that demonstrates broad stewardship towards all actions conducive and necessary for improvement in reproductive, maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health.
22. Create an enabling environment by empowering communities and strengthening the role of men in improving access to sexual reproductive health and reproductive rights services.

Pillar 4: Rights, Governance and Youth Empowerment

Africa's youth account for more than 60% of the continent's population. This is a huge resource if adequately incentivised for ensuring meaningful participation, representation and observance of human rights on the continent. However, the challenge remains the limited participation of this huge resource in formal political processes and insufficient enjoyment of their rights. This challenge often leads to disenfranchisement and frustrations which if not adequately addressed threatens social cohesion, peace and security of the society to expand their capabilities.

Harnessing the demographic dividend on the continent requires investments in ensuring participatory, representative and inclusive political processes as well as responsive state institutions. This must be premised on the enjoyment, protection and respect for fundamental civil, political and socio-economic rights of young people including young women, who experience dire rights-based challenges. Further to this, effective management of diversity through the provision of safe spaces for inter-generational mutual learning and collaboration is anticipated to help provide leadership and mentorship opportunities for the emerging leaders on whose shoulders the sustenance of the modest gains the continent has achieved rests.

Local, national and regional policy implementation in addition to socio-cultural attitude changes are capable of providing the foundations for unleashing the creative potentials of an increasingly educated, cosmopolitan and indeed tech-savvy youth population. Ensuring greater access for young people to effectively engage and participate in local governments, legislatures, judiciary and political parties will significantly accelerate the attainment of the goals of the African Union Agenda 2063 and Agenda 2030.

In laying the foundations for harnessing the demographic dividend and propelling transformative development of AU Member States, investments must be made in continuously opening the political space, upholding rights, ensuring participatory governance and empowering Africa's youth. Already, the African Union, Regional Economic Communities and Member States have adopted several normative instruments, policy directives including the African Governance Architecture – Youth Engagement Strategy (AGA-YES) to accelerate progress in these areas. Emphasis should remain on improved implementation, progress monitoring and sharing of comparable lessons across the board.

Overall, accelerating the implementation of these commitments will enhance the delivery of the other three pillars needed to harness the demographic dividend for the attainment of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 sustainable development goals.

Key Actions and Deliverables

23. Ensure universal ratification, domestication and full implementation of all African Union Shared Values instruments including the African Youth Charter (AYC) and the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (ACDEG) by all Member States of the African Union by the end of the year 2017.
24. Create inclusive National Implementation Mechanisms for regular and periodic reporting on the implementation of the Shared Values Instruments particularly the African Youth Charter and the ACDEG, through existing mechanisms such as the African Peer Review Mechanism and the State Reporting on the ACDEG. Specifically, institute the regular production of the State of African Youth Report that incorporates reports from National Youth Councils and various stakeholders on the status of implementation of the African Youth Charter and related instruments.
25. Eliminate barriers to active participation of youth in nation building including in political spaces and put in place mechanisms to facilitate their meaningful participation in political parties, parliaments, judiciary, cabinets and civil service structures of Member States.
26. Remove all discriminatory laws and limitations to full participation of young people in electoral processes through inclusive electoral laws and constitutions which fosters effective diversity management.
27. Enhance the empowerment of youth through the integration of civic education in national educational curricula, media platforms and other channels to instill principles of Pan-Africanism, the rule of law, human rights and individual duties and responsibilities.
28. Proscribe all laws posing barriers to the full exercise and enjoyment of the fundamental rights of young people to fully participate in the democratic governance processes at continental, regional, national and grassroots levels.
29. Review, revise, amend or abolish all laws, regulations, policies, practices and customs that have a discriminatory impact on youth especially girls and young women, without distinction of any kind, and ensure that the provisions of multiple legal systems comply with international human rights regulations and laws. These must include protection from harmful practices like early, forced or child marriages, sexual and gender-based violence, female genital mutilation (FGM).
30. Strengthen independent youth formations, networks and organisation including establishment of independent youth commissions at national and sub-regional levels to champion youth activities.

31. Strengthen AU's institutional structure and delivery capacity for youth empowerment and development through the elevation of the Youth Division to a Directorate.
32. Appoint an AU Special Envoy on Youth to lead advocacy and champion the prioritization of youth issues within continental and other decision-making spaces.
33. Institute youth leadership and empowerment trainings aimed at deepening Pan African ideals and aspirations in the youth
34. Ensure the implementation of various decisions of the AU Assembly of Heads of States on youth leadership and participation in decision making processes. In this vein, efforts must be put in place to establish an annual Youth Parliament and a Model African Union Assembly at the continental level.
35. Strengthen existing youth engagement and participation initiatives of the African Union including the African Youth Volunteers Corps, African Union Youth Clubs, AGA-YES activities including the Youth Advisory Panel, the Moot Court and Annual Youth Dialogue on Democracy, Human Rights and Governance.

9. Enabling Implementation and Measuring Progress

In order to facilitate effective implementation of the key actions and proposals of this roadmap, it is important to emphasize the need to be guided by the core principles of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development especially as relates to a people-centred approach to development and a commitment to leave no one behind. The other principles and values elaborated in the roadmap will also remain central towards ensuring that the impact of its implementation is inclusive and sustainable. Whilst commitments are important at the continental and sub-regional levels, they only get truly manifested in the lives of people if implemented at country level.

As such, in order to facilitate effective implementation of the roadmap, it is important to put in place measures that would guide countries, anticipate proper monitoring, evaluation and reporting and enable the active participation of all stakeholders at all levels. The main drivers to ensure implementation include adequate policies, frameworks and funding; capacity-building and partnerships. Additionally, it would be important to leverage the decisions of Heads of State and Government on the follow up and implementation of key continental level instruments such as the Addis Ababa Declaration on Population and Development beyond 2014 and its accountability, monitoring and reporting mechanism as a way of demonstrating progress.

It should also be underlined that based on inputs received from various stakeholders, the Commission in consultation with partners have proposed a calendar of key activities (August 2016 to December 2017) with a clear timeline in order to facilitate and accelerate the implementation and measure progress of the Roadmap.

In this regard, the following key actions have been proposed:

36. Analyze and understand socioeconomic and political situation through the preparation of national demographic dividend profiles with the objective of

- facilitating evidence-based development planning processes with regard to the challenges and opportunities to harnessing the demographic dividend in countries in order to define country-specific responses.
37. Strengthen capacity to coordinate, monitor and report on progress in implementation of demographic dividend priorities (including strengthening of national data systems to ensure timely and quality data for planning and decision making). This may include establishment of a multi-sectoral demographic dividend observatory under the leadership of the National Statistics, Planning and/or Population Agencies, as appropriate.
 38. Work with academia, research institutions and think tanks to generate needed research and evidence towards harnessing the demographic dividend and provide technical support towards building country expertise.
 39. Strengthen the capacity of planning authorities, sector and district planning units to integrate demographic dividend priorities into sectoral, local and national development plans and actions based on analytical evidence.
 40. Develop and implement a robust performance monitoring, and accountability mechanism for demographic dividend initiatives and strategies at national, regional and continental levels, including for youth-focused investment policies and programmes.
 41. Build on the successes of key regional initiatives⁴ around the continent on demographic dividend and women's empowerment and scale them up to cover more countries across Africa, including to facilitate access to funding. Convene multiple stakeholders and partners for advocacy, resource mobilization and strategic partnerships around harnessing the demographic dividend.
 42. Establish continental and national funds for youth development to support implementation towards the demographic dividend including through increasing and allocating special funds to implement the 2017 theme of the year and engaging regional and other development banks (AfDB, EADB, BOAD, BCEAO, BEEAC, etc.) to increase their youth portfolio to facilitate access to credit and support to entrepreneurship initiatives of youth
 43. Mobilize support, particularly through AU and partners Bilateral Forums (TICAD, Africa-China, Africa-EU, Africa-Korea, Africa-India, Africa-USA, G20 etc.), for youth empowerment and increased investments in education and skills development, entrepreneurial skills and jobs creation, health in order to harness demographic dividend.
 44. Ensure country launches of the theme of the year 2017 on harnessing the demographic dividend through investments in youth, through multi stakeholder engagement. These national launches and consultations will facilitate and guide the preparation of National Demographic Dividend Roadmaps.

⁴ Example: Sahel Women's Empowerment and Demographic Dividend project funded by World Bank and supported by UNFPA: Burkina Faso, Chad, Cote d'Ivoire, Mali, Mauritania, Niger.

45. Conduct continental, regional and national advocacy campaigns, including at the grassroots level, to raise awareness and increase understanding of the demographic dividend with the objective of building ownership and to ensuring the successful implementation of AU Project 2017.
46. Encourage the UN system, including key agencies like UNFPA to work with relevant stakeholders to establish a global partnership, including the creation of a Group of Friends at the UN General Assembly, towards harness demographic dividend in Africa.
47. Create an index based on a set of indicators, specific to each pillar of the roadmap (Economic empowerment; Health and wellbeing; employment and entrepreneurship; education and skills development; youth empowerment and advocacy) with the aim to measuring, monitoring and reporting on investments in youth at the country level towards harnessing the demographic dividend.
48. Engage networks of Parliamentarians to champion demographic dividend initiatives in their respective parliaments and at the level of the Panafrican Parliament (PAP).
49. All AU Specialized Technical Committees, RECS and other continental meetings held in 2017 to focus on and identify their sector contribution to harnessing the demographic dividend and harmonization of continental policies towards a coherent demographic dividend implementation in Africa.

10. Conclusion and Way Forward

Harnessing the demographic dividend in Africa presents a strategic opportunity to realize the aspirations and goals of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda and this roadmap serves as a strong foundation to position countries in Africa towards this objective. Africa has been committed to transforming its large youth population into a development asset. Building on previous decisions of the AU Assembly on youth empowerment, the 2017 theme on “Harnessing the Demographic Dividend through Investments in Youth”, has the potential to have far-reaching implications that would address all the key issues that Governments have had to contend with, and change the development trajectory of Africa towards building the Africa We Want.

As Africa implements this roadmap, it would be important to take steps to ensure that the gains made in 2017 are sustained.

11. ANNEXES

Matrix of Activities

Aug-16	Sep-16	Oct-16	Nov-16	Jan-17	Feb-17	Mar-17	May-17
1st Steering Committee Meeting of AUC and partners on the implementation of the DD Roadmap	High Level Event on the margins of 71 st UN General Assembly on "Building A Global partnership on demographic dividend for Africa" New, York.	5 Sub-Regional Consultations on 2017 theme – at REC level By February 2017	Hold sessions on Demographic Dividend during African Development Forum, 13-17 November under the theme "Youth Migration and Africa's Structural Transformation"	African Cup of Nations to commemorate the importance of investments in youth towards harnessing the demographic dividend in Africa (to be held in conjunction with CAF/FIFA) Libreville, Gabon	Launches of AU 2017 theme of the year at country level	Key sessions on DD to be held during Africa Development Week (Including the Annual Adedeji Lecture)	Continental Donor Roundtable towards mobilizing resources for demographic dividend in Africa (including the possible establishment of the Africa Youth Development Fund) on sidelines of Annual AfDB Assembly
Development of the Demographic Dividend National Profiles for 53 Member States -To be finalized by May2017		Africa Week, New York, on "Support of the United Nations community to the African Union's Project 2017 in line with Agendas 2063 and 2030".	High Level Event on Linkages between Climate Change and Demographic Dividend on the margins of COP 22, Marrakech, Morocco	Pre-Summit on Harnessing Demographic Dividend through Investments in Youth - January 2017 (With all Stakeholders. i.e MS, Private Sector, Partners, Donor countries, youth, RECs, Media, ...etc), Addis Ababa	Bamako Summit on Peace, Security and Economic Development		

<p>Development of an Atlas on Demographic Dividend To be finalized by May 2017</p>		<p>Roundtable for Resource Mobilization for project 2017 on margins of WB-IMF Autumn Meeting (AUC, Member States, World Bank, AfDB, Private Sector) In Washington D.C.</p>	<p>Development of Gender Score Cards with linkages to the key pillars of DD</p> <p>Meeting of the African Population Experts Committee (APEC) to review and validate the Monitoring Tool for the Addis Ababa Declaration on Population and Development beyond 2014</p>	<p>Forum of African Philanthropists, CEOs and Entrepreneurs on the Demographic Dividend under the theme "Transforming Africa through a Skills Revolution and Entrepreneurship" held within Pre-Summit, Addis Ababa</p>			
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Jun-17	Jul-17	Aug-17	Sep-17	Oct-17	Nov -17	Jan -18
<p>Africa Youth Day on "Harnessing the demographic dividend through investments in youth"</p> <p>Hosted in Malawi</p>	<p>Continental Forum on Girls' Empowerment and Elimination of Harmful Practices in Africa</p> <p>Hosted by Liberia</p>	<p>Commemorate International Youth Day with a focus on investments in youth towards harnessing the demographic dividend in Africa</p>	<p>UN General Assembly High Level Event on Demographic Dividend with African First Ladies (OAFLA)</p> <p>New York</p>	<p>African Week in New York on "Harnessing the demographic dividend through investments in youth"</p>	<p>Preparation of report on implementation of theme of the year by Steering Committee</p>	<p>Decision on Demographic Dividend Continental Initiative and Plan of Action by AU Heads of State</p>

MasterCard Africa Youth Summit on Entrepreneurship						
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