



African Digital Compact

Acronyms

AfCFTA	Africa Continental Free Trade Area
ADC	African Digital Compact
AUC	African Union Commission
AUCSEG	African Union Cyber Security Expert Group
CERTs	Computer Emergency Response Teams
CSIRTs	Cyber Security Incident Response Teams
DPI	Digital Public Infrastructure
DTS	African Union Digital Transformation Strategy
GDC	Global Digital Compact
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
ICT	Information Communications Technology
ITU	International Telecommunication Union
MS	Member States
PRIDA	Policy and Regulation Initiative for Digital Africa
UN	United Nations
WSIS	World Summit on the Information Society

Preface

The world is in an unprecedented wave of digital transformation despite cascading global crises and multitude of interconnected challenges that require collective and innovative actions. The digital era has ushered in massive changes to the global economy and society, driven by the rapid adoption of digital technologies revolutionizing the way we live and work.

Digital transformation holds great promise to achieve Africa's development ambitions, accelerate the attainment of the agenda 2063 goals and contribute to building resilience against threats related to climate change, conflicts, or future pandemics.

Africa's population, estimated at 1.3 billion people, is young and increasingly connected with the number expected to reach over 800 million by 2025. This growing digitization and connectivity provide the platform for Africa to leapfrog stages of development through embracing emerging solutions. Therefore, investing in digital infrastructure, promoting digital skills, fostering research and innovation, strengthening cybersecurity, and developing data governance capabilities must be a priority for our governments.

The African Digital Compact emphasizes key priorities and strategic imperatives for Africa to embrace this digital revolution, unleash its positive and transformative potential and collaboratively create the necessary guardrails for a safer and healthier digital environment while positioning Africa at the centre of digital innovation.

The central role of digital in contemporary economy and society requires a high-level policy perspective to balance multiple objectives as well as international cooperation and interoperable approaches to ensure efficient, equitable and responsible use of these technologies to achieve a better future for all.

As the world is getting interdependent and stakes are getting higher from the political, economic and security perspectives. African countries must coordinate common positions on digital policy and AI governance issues, effectively participate in the negotiations of the Global Digital Compact and speak with a unified voice to preserve African interests in the global digital space.

H.E. Moussa Faki Mahamat
Chairperson, African Union Commission

Foreword

Digital is high on the agenda of African leaders, and this is reflected in a number of African Union Summit decisions and strategic frameworks adopted in recent years. Ahead of the UN Summit of the future aiming at laying the foundation for inclusive digital future for all and to prepare African countries negotiations of the Global Digital Compact (GDC), the African Union Commission developed the African Digital Compact (ADC) that builds on multi-stakeholder engagement in the digital transformation journey ranging from governments, the private sector, civil society, and regional / international organizations and partners in coordinated and collaborative efforts to realize the digital agenda of the African Union that would be aligned with international best practices and standards.

The African Digital Compact represents Africa's unified resolve that charts the continent's digital future and leverages the transformative potential of digital technologies to promote sustainable development, economic growth, and social wellbeing across Africa. The Compact aims to harness the power of digitalization to foster prosperity, strengthen governance, expand inclusion, and improve the quality of life for all Africans. By embracing digital innovation and connectivity, African nations aspire to build forward better through a human-centered digital economy that works for everyone and leaves no one behind.

The Compact envisions a digitally empowered and transformed Africa, in tandem with Agenda 2063 aspirations focussing on key priorities requiring collective engagement to ensure universal access and inclusive participation in the modern economy that bolster multilateral cooperation and strategic partnerships.

The African Digital Compact is our commitment towards digital transformation in concerted and joint efforts grounded in unity, solidarity, innovation, and inclusivity to build peaceful and prosperous Africa for the future generations, the Africa we want.

H.E. Dr. Amani Abou-Zeid
AU Commissioner for Infrastructure and Energy

Acknowledgment

The African Digital Compact was prepared under the overall guidance of H.E Dr. Amani Abou-Zeid African Union Commissioner for Infrastructure and Energy, by a team comprising Dr. Kamugisha Kazaura, Director of Infrastructure and Energy Department, Mr. Waleed Hamdi Head of Information Society Division and Mr. Adil Sulieman, Senior Policy Officer (Team Coordinator), Moses Bayingana, Senior Policy Officer , Mihret Woodmatas , Senior ICT expert ,AU Commission as well as valuable contributions from members of the African Union Cyber Security Expert Group including but not limited to Houda Chihi., Jean-Robert Hountomey, Joan Obiero, John Ubena, Kaleem Ahmed Usmani, Margaret Nyambura Ndung'u, Michael Ilishebo, Mtendere Gondwe, and Ngoulaye Janvier PhD, Towela Nyirenda – Jere

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Executive Summary

A young boy is sitting on a wooden chair outdoors, wearing a VR headset. He is pointing his right index finger upwards. He is wearing a green and blue patterned shirt. A quote is overlaid on the image.

“ If you want to go fast, go alone; if you want to go far, go together. ” African Proverb

This proverb highlights the essence of collaboration and collective action, aligning with the ADC’s focus on multi-stakeholder digital cooperation. It underscores the importance of unified efforts across African nations and various sectors to harness the power of digital technologies for sustainable development, inclusivity, and economic growth, resonating with the goals of both the ADC and Agenda 2063. This proverb captures the spirit of cooperation and long-term commitment needed to realize a digitally empowered and inclusive Africa.

Vision and Purpose

The African Union Digital Compact (ADC) is a forward-looking initiative aimed at harnessing the transformative potential of digital technologies to foster sustainable development, economic growth, and societal well-being throughout Africa. It is Africa's contribution to the development and negotiations of the United Nations Global Digital Compact in preparation of the Summit of the Future, the African Union's Agenda 2063, the Digital Transformation Strategy for Africa (2020-2030) and its associated policies, frameworks and strategies such as the AU Interoperability Framework for Digital ID, AU Data Policy Framework, the AU Strategy on Enabling Policy and Regulatory Environment for Africa's Digital Single Market, Child Online Safety and Empowerment Policy, and the Malabo Convention on Cyber Security and Personal Data Protection.

The Compact seeks to unify Africa's digital transformation efforts, ensuring they align with global standards while addressing the continent's unique challenges and opportunities. The ADC vision is to realize an inclusive, resilient, and sustainable digital Africa that leverages ICTs for the continent's socio-economic development and integration, fostering innovation and digital rights for all its citizens, in alignment with Agenda 2063's aspirations for a prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development.

The main purpose of ADC is to foster stakeholder digital cooperation within Africa and beyond, aligning with global standards and practices to bridge digital divides, enhance digital literacy, and ensure that digital technologies serve as a catalyst for achieving the SDGs and Agenda 2063 goals. The compact aims to promote digital inclusivity, protect digital rights, and ensure

a safe and secure digital environment for all Africans, and position Africa as a proactive contributor to the global digital economy.

This document distils the core aspects and strategic imperatives outlined in the comprehensive analysis and recommendations provided in the context of:

1. The ongoing development of the Global Digital Compact
2. The African Union's Agenda 2063
3. The Digital Transformation Strategy for Africa (2020-2030)
4. The African Union (Malabo) Convention on Cyber Security and Personal Data Protection
5. The Digital Sectorial Strategies for agriculture, education, and health
6. The AU Interoperability Framework for Digital ID
7. The AU Data Policy Framework,
8. The AU Strategy on Enabling Policy and Regulatory Environment for Africa's Digital Single Market
9. The Africa Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA)
10. The unique opportunities and challenges presented by Africa's digital landscape, all underpinned by guiding principles tailored to the African context.

Strategic Imperatives

The Compact outlines several strategic imperatives:

1. **Universal Connectivity and Universal Access:** Aiming to connect all individuals and institutions, safely and securely to the Internet, and empowering them to fully utilize digital technologies and services, regardless of their gender, age, education, geographical local, socio-economic status, or any other divides.
 2. **Capacity Building to Empower Africa's Engagement in the Digital Economy:** Accelerating knowledge transfer and adoption, and on enhancing digital literacy and skills development, to empower African's engagement in, contribution to, and benefit from the digital economy, locally and globally. A special focus is required to reap the benefits of the increasing job opportunities in digital technologies and related services, while minimizing the potential impact on the traditional employment.
 3. **Leveraging Digital Technologies for green, resilient, and inclusive sustainable Development:** Mainstreaming digitalization in critical sectors for green and inclusive sustainable development
 4. **Data Protection and Internet Integrity:** Safeguarding privacy, enhancing data governance, and avoiding Internet fragmentation.
 5. **Cybersecurity and the Protection of the ICT-enabled Critical Infrastructures:** Establish and implement frameworks for cybersecurity and for the protection of the ICT-enabled critical infrastructures.
 6. **Safety and Stability:** Effective engagement with international and regional initiatives and contribution towards developing and implementing cyber norms and confidence building measures.
 7. **Digital Rights and Accountability:** Applying human rights principles online and ensuring transparency and accountability online.
 8. **Regulation and Innovation:** Encouraging the ethical regulation of artificial intelligence and other emerging technologies and supporting innovation and creativity across Africa.
 9. **Digital Governance:** Bridging the digital governance gap for African countries to support Africa's Socio-economic development and reap the full potential of the digital economy.
- ## Collaborative Framework
- The Compact's development involved extensive consultations with stakeholders across Africa, including the public and private sectors, civil society, academia, and regional organizations. This inclusive approach ensured that the Compact reflects a wide range of perspectives and priorities, embodying a collective vision for Africa's digital future.
- ## Objectives and Implementation
- The Compact emphasizes the need for:
1. Bridging the digital divides by making digital technologies accessible and affordable across the continent.
 2. Enhancing digital literacy and skills to prepare Africans for the digital economy.
 3. Leveraging Digital Technologies for Green, Resilient, and Inclusive Sustainable Development

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4. Developing and implementing robust cybersecurity strategies and policies to protect digital ecosystems.
 5. Supporting digital innovation and entrepreneurship to stimulate economic growth.
 6. Harmonizing digital and data policies to facilitate cross-border collaboration.
 7. Bridging the digital governance gap to accelerate economic growth and maximize safe and peaceful use of ICTs.

To support the implementation of the African Digital Compact, an African Digital Cooperation Forum (ADCF) is being proposed as a *Pioneering Platform for Multi-stakeholder Engagement, Collaboration, and Innovation in the Digital Sphere*. This forum Serves as a **Knowledge Broker** and

an **Investment Facilitator** for collaborative ADC programs and projects, and a conduit for harmonizing digital initiatives across the continent and beyond.

Moving Forward

The African Union Digital Compact calls for unified action among African nations, the private sector, civil society, and international partners. It envisions a digitally empowered Africa where digital technologies drive progress, inclusivity, and prosperity. This executive summary invites all stakeholders to join in realizing this vision, emphasizing that collective effort is essential for a sustainable and inclusive digital transformation and socio-economic development across Africa to accelerate the attainment of the AU Agenda 2063 goals and aspirations.

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Chapter I: Introduction



“ A beautiful thing is never perfect. Egyptian Proverb ”

This African proverb highlights the inherent vulnerabilities in any system, emphasizing that even the most advanced digital infrastructures are not without flaws, thus underscoring the perpetual need for vigilance, continual updates, and a multi-layered security approach to safeguard peace and security both nationally and globally. It serves as a poignant reminder that while technology offers substantial benefits for governance and peacekeeping, it is not a cure-all; instead, a proactive and comprehensive strategy is crucial for mitigating risks and addressing vulnerabilities. This proverb also reflects the challenges communities or entities face in recognizing their own limitations without the insights brought about by collective understanding and collaboration.

It mirrors the African Union Digital Compact's commitment to bridging the digital divide, fostering innovation, and ensuring robust cybersecurity through a unified approach that aligns with both continental and global frameworks. By tackling these intrinsic challenges, the initiative, deeply rooted in the collective wisdom and resilience of the African continent, aims to harness the immense potential of digital technologies to drive sustainable development, economic growth, and societal well-being across Africa.

In an era marked by rapid technological advancements and global digital integration, the African Union recognizes the imperative of a unified, strategic approach to digital transformation, one that aligns with the United Nations Global Digital Compact, Agenda 2063, the Africa Digital Transformation Strategy for 2020-2030, and The African Union (Malabo) Convention on Cyber Security and Personal Data Protection, the African Union Declaration on Internet Governance and Development of Africa's Digital Economy Assembly/AU/Decl.3(XXX), the AU Data Policy Framework (EX.CL/Dec.1144(XL), among others.

The African Digital Compact emerges as a strategic blueprint for leveraging digitalization as a catalyst for continent-wide socio-economic development. It addresses the unique challenges and opportunities presented by Africa's digital landscape, including bridging digital divides, fostering innovation, ensuring data protection and privacy, enhancing cybersecurity, and promoting inclusive and equitable access to digital technologies. This Compact not only articulates our shared aspirations for a digitally empowered Africa but also commits to actionable, collaborative efforts to realize this vision, embodying the African Union's dedication to a future where digital technologies serve as a cornerstone of prosperity, unity, and global participation. Together, we continue to witness a digital revolution that is redefining the future of our continent. The African Digital Compact echoes the collective resolve to build a digitally inclusive Africa that resonates with prosperity for all.

Background

At the dawn of a digital renaissance, the African continent stands on the brink of transformative growth, driven by the digital revolution. This pivotal moment offers an

unparalleled opportunity to fast-track socio-economic and political reforms across key sectors, aligning with the visionary goals of the African Union's Agenda 2063. The surge in digital technologies heralds a new epoch of innovation, necessitating a swift embrace by African nations to unlock the potential of the digital economy, promising significant contributions to the global workforce and GDP growth.

The digital era brings to the forefront the indispensable role of data in crafting policies for socio-economic advancement, presenting Africa with the prospect of a sustainable and inclusive future shaped by data-driven decisions. Yet, this journey is not without its perils, as the misuse of digital technologies poses substantial threats to the integrity and security of the digital transformation. It underscores the imperative for global collaboration to establish cybersecurity and digital trust as cornerstones of a safe and equitable digital future.

In response to these challenges, the African Digital Compact emerges as strategic initiatives aimed at harnessing digital transformation for continental development. Aligned with ongoing UN proposal for global digital compacts and the African Union's strategic frameworks, these initiatives seek to outline a cohesive approach towards leveraging technology for socio-economic growth, ensuring Africa's proactive participation in the global digital landscape. This collective endeavour represents a critical step towards realizing a digitally empowered Africa, ready to navigate the complexities of the digital age with resilience, innovation, and inclusivity.

Cornerstone Resolutions Shaping the African Digital Compact

1. The Declaration Assembly/AU/Decl.2(XVIII), from the 18th Ordinary

- Session of the Assembly of the African Union in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, January 2012, under the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA), highlights a pivotal achievement: extending regional fibre optic connectivity to an additional 17 Member States, developing national and regional Internet Exchange Points, and creating an enabling environment for the development of ICTs in Africa.
2. The African Union Assembly Decision Assembly/AU/Dec.529(XXIII), during the 23rd Ordinary Session in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, June 2014, adopting the African Union Convention on Cyber Security and Personal Data Protection, which officially came into effect on 08 June 2023.
 3. The 30th Ordinary Session in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 28-29 January 2018, resulted in the Declaration (Assembly/AU/Decl.3(XXX)) on Internet Governance and Africa's Digital Economy Development, reaffirming the principles for a globally open, accessible, resilient, and interoperable Internet as the foundation for future stakeholder engagements in Internet-related policymaking.
 4. The Executive Council's Decision 1074(XXXVI) from the 3rd Ordinary Session of the STC on Communication and ICT in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt, 25-26 October 2019, endorsed the Digital Transformation Strategy for Africa (DTS), aiming for an inclusive digital society and economy. The AU Commission's coordination in developing policies and frameworks supports the harmonization of Africa's digital ecosystem, with strategies such as Digital Agriculture, Digital Education, Digital Health, the AU Data Policy Framework, and others already endorsed for implementation.
 5. The Executive Council's Decision 1143 1167(XL) from February 2022 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, adopted the AU Interoperability Framework for Digital ID and the AU Data Policy Framework, promoting a unified data governance mechanism for cross-border data flow, facilitating digital integration and prosperity. Efforts are underway to assist Member States in implementing these strategies.
 6. The 5th Ordinary Session of the STC on CICT held in Addis Ababa Ethiopia on 23 November 2023 approved the following:
 - 6.1 The Continental Strategy on Enabling Policy and Regulatory Environment for Africa's Single Digital Market; its Implementation Plan and M&E Framework.
 - 6.2 The Guidelines on the Integration of Data Provision in Digital Trade Protocols.
 - 6.3 The Policy on Child Online Safety and Empowerment.
 - 6.4 The Conceptual Framework of the Continental Artificial Intelligence (AI) Strategy. The above was adopted by the AU Summit in February 2024 after the AU Executive Council endorsement.
 7. In response to the aforesaid, the Ministers responsible for Communication and ICT, during the Fifth Ordinary Session of the STC on CICT in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on 23 November 2023, further tasked the African Union Commission with the development of an African Digital Compact for the upcoming United Nations Summit of the Future, and to convene an Extra-Ordinary STC session in early 2024 to consider and approve this Compact, and the formulation of strategies addressing climate, food security, energy crises, and the development of continental Cybersecurity and AI strategies.

Facing the Challenges of Digital Transformation in Africa

Africa's digital transformation journey, aimed at socio-economic growth and inclusivity, encounters several hurdles, including the digital divide, cybersecurity threats, automation's impact on jobs, data sovereignty and privacy, reliance on foreign technology, skills gap, regulatory barriers, and socio-cultural effects. Solutions involve comprehensive strategies: bolstering digital

infrastructure, enhancing cybersecurity measures, fostering digital literacy, implementing robust data protection laws, nurturing local technology ecosystems, modernizing regulatory frameworks, and deeply engaging community stakeholders. This multifaceted approach promises to navigate these challenges effectively, ensuring that digital transformation in Africa aligns with the African Union's vision for an empowered, inclusive, and sustainable digital future.



Chapter II: Situational Analysis for the Proposed African Union Digital Compact



“ A river cuts through rock not because of its power, but because of its persistence.”

Southern African Proverb

This proverb underscores the themes of resilience and continuous effort, reflecting the analysis' focus on navigating the complex digital landscape of Africa, which is marked by both significant challenges and remarkable opportunities. It suggests that through sustained effort and commitment to the principles and strategic plans laid out in the African Union Digital Compact, such as the Africa Digital Transformation Strategy and the AfCFTA Digital Trade Protocol, Africa can overcome obstacles and harness digital technologies for transformative growth and sustainable development. This aligns with the need for persistent action to build digital infrastructure, enhance digital literacy, and foster innovation across the continent.



The African Union, in synergy with the United Nations recommendations on the Global Digital Compact, and alignment with Africa's Agenda 2063, the Africa Digital Transformation Strategy for 2020-2030, and the African Continental Free Trade Agreement, undertakes this situational analysis to comprehensively assess the continent's digital landscape. This analysis navigates through the challenges, opportunities, and priorities inherent in Africa's digital ecosystem, underpinned by guiding principles that resonate with the African context.

United Nations Process on Developing the Global Digital Compact

The Draft United Nations Global Digital Compact emphasizes the imperative for universal connectivity, digital public goods, digital inclusion, digital capacity building, and the safeguarding of digital rights and trust. These recommendations advocate for a global digital ecosystem that is equitable, inclusive, and accessible to all, urging member states to commit to shared principles and actions that foster digital cooperation and governance. For Africa, these recommendations provide a blueprint for harnessing digital technologies to achieve sustainable development, economic growth, and societal well-being.

African Union's Agenda 2063

Agenda 2063, the African Union's strategic framework for the socio-economic transformation of the continent over the next 50 years, envisages an Africa that

is prosperous, peaceful, and integrated, driven by its citizens and representing a dynamic force in the global arena. Digital transformation is pivotal to realizing this vision, and the moonshots of its Second Ten Year Implementation Plan 2024 – 2033, offering pathways to innovate service delivery in health, education, and governance, improve agricultural and industrial productivity, and enhance trade and economic integration across the continent by bolstering cross border digital trade.

The Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA Digital Trade)

The AfCFTA Digital Trade Protocol, also known as the Protocol on Digital Trade, is a part of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Agreement. The Protocol aims to promote the emergence of African-owned e-commerce platforms at national, regional, and continental levels. Digital trade is an integral part of free trade and critical to boosting intra-Africa trade. The Draft 2.0 Protocol on Digital Trade presents a roadmap for an Africa where digital trade barriers are minimized, and technological opportunities are maximized. The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) agreement will create the largest free trade area in the world measured by the number of countries participating. The pact connects 1.3 billion people across 55 countries with a combined gross domestic product (GDP) valued at US\$3.4 trillion. It has the potential to lift 30 million people out of extreme poverty, but achieving its full potential will depend on putting in place significant policy reforms and trade facilitation measures.



Digital Transformation Strategy for Africa (2020-2030)

The Digital Transformation Strategy for Africa outlines a comprehensive approach to leverage digital technologies for inclusive and sustainable development. It focuses on building digital infrastructure, fostering digital skills and entrepreneurship, enhancing data protection and cybersecurity, and promoting innovation and e-governance. This strategy is a cornerstone for Africa's digital policy, guiding national and regional efforts to create a harmonized digital market and society.

Africa's Digital Landscape – Challenges, Opportunities, and Priorities

Africa's digital landscape is characterized by a unique set of challenges, including limited infrastructure, digital divides, inadequate regulatory frameworks, and cybersecurity threats. However, it also presents unparalleled opportunities for transformative growth through digitalization. The expansion of

mobile connectivity, the rise of digital entrepreneurship, the potential for e-governance, and the utilization of emerging technologies like AI, quantum computing, Robotics and blockchain offer avenues for leapfrogging traditional development hurdles. Prioritizing the development of digital infrastructure, fostering digital literacy and skills, enhancing data protection and privacy, and leveraging digital technologies for socio-economic development emerge as critical for Africa's digital transformation.

The situational analysis above underscores the necessity for a concerted effort to address the digital transformation challenges while capitalizing on the opportunities presented by the digital age. The proposed African Union Digital Compact, informed by these analyses and principles, aims to chart a strategic path forward for Africa's digital future, aligning with global standards and recommendations, and tailored to the unique needs and aspirations of the African continent.

Chapter III: Pillars of the Proposed African Digital Compact



**“ Cross the river in a crowd
and the crocodile won’t
eat you. African Proverb ”**

This proverb emphasizes the strength and safety found in unity and collective action, mirroring the Compact’s structured framework which seeks to catalyse a digital revolution across Africa through cooperation and shared commitment. It aligns with the ethos of “Unity is strength, division is weakness,” highlighting the necessity for collaborative efforts across nations and sectors to harness digital technologies effectively, ensuring sustainable development, economic growth, and enhanced societal well-being throughout the continent.

At the heart of the African Digital Compact lies a structured framework of pillars, meticulously crafted to catalyse a digital revolution across the continent, embodying the ethos of “Unity is strength, division is weakness.” This framework is underpinned by enduring principles of inclusivity, equity, sustainability, and robust partnership, aiming to transform Africa into a digitally empowered society. It sets forth a clear objective to leverage digital technologies for sustainable development, economic growth, and the enhancement of societal well-being, thus addressing the diverse challenges and seizing the myriad opportunities within Africa’s digital landscape. The Compact outlines concrete actions ranging from ensuring affordable access to digital technologies and fostering digital innovation ecosystems, to strengthening cybersecurity measures and promoting digital literacy. These pillars are not mere guidelines but a call to action for African nations and their global partners to collaboratively pave the way for a future where digital transformation drives progress for all, echoing the collective resolve to build a digitally inclusive Africa that resonates with prosperity and unity.

The foundation and direction of the ADC Strategic Initiatives are deeply anchored in, and informed by, an array of seminal documents and initiatives, prominently spearheaded by the African Union (AU), including but not limited to:

1. **Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want:** Envisions a digitally connected Africa contributing to universal connectivity, digital literacy, affordable access, digital economy, and sustainable development.
2. **Digital Transformation Strategy for Africa (2020-2030):** Lays foundational policies for enhancing connectivity, cybersecurity, digital governance, and digital economy.
3. **AU Data Policy Framework:** Provides guidelines for protecting data and privacy rights and promoting digital public goods.
4. **AU Interoperability Framework for Digital ID:** Supports digital governance and participation by ensuring secure and interoperable digital identities.
5. **Strategy on Enabling Policy and Regulatory Environment for Africa’s Digital Single Market:** Aims to achieve affordable access, digital economy growth, and digital governance.
6. **Malabo Convention on Cyber Security and Personal Data Protection:** Focuses on cybersecurity, trust, and protecting data and privacy rights.
7. **Draft Guidelines for the Integration of Data Provision in Digital Trade Protocols:** Contributes to digital governance and cross border digital trade to bolster the Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).
8. **Draft Policy on Child Online Safety and Empowerment:** Addresses digital inclusion, literacy, and protecting data and privacy rights with a focus on children’s safety online.
9. **Draft Conceptual Framework for the Continental Artificial Intelligence (AI) Strategy:** Guides the development of AI in harmony with sustainable development and digital governance.

The above frameworks demonstrate the comprehensive approach the African Union has already taken towards digital transformation and how strategic AU policies align and synergise with global digital compact goals and the aspirations of an open, free, and secure digital future. The AU Developed the relevant policies with

the aspiration of addressing crucial facets such as connectivity, inclusion, economy, and governance to realize the digital future envisioned in both continental and global frameworks.

The Proposed African Digital Compact is structured around several key pillars, each designed to address specific aspects of digital transformation in Africa. These pillars reflect a commitment to inclusivity, equity, sustainability, and partnership, and are aimed at catalysing a continent-wide digital revolution. Here are the detailed pillars of the Compact:



Pillar One: Ensuring Affordable Access to Digital Technologies

Aligned with the Draft United Nations Global Digital Compact, the African Union's Agenda 2063, the Africa Digital Transformation Strategy for 2020-2030, and the Malabo Convention, Pillar One of the African Digital Compact focuses on Ensuring Affordable Access to Digital Technologies. This initiative is designed to bridge the digital divide by making digital technologies and internet access: affordable, reliable, inclusive, open, secure, and safe; across the African continent, with a special emphasis on reaching rural and underserved communities. It represents a foundational step towards realizing a digitally empowered Africa, where technology serves as a catalyst for sustainable development, economic growth, and societal well-being.

Objectives

- 1. Broaden reliable and secure Connectivity:** Extend the reach of digital infrastructure across the continent, covering all currently underserved areas, ensuring every individual in Africa can connect to the Internet.

- 2. Improve affordability:** Implement strategies to support openness, encourage innovation, and attract investments, to lower the cost and improve the quality and reliability of internet services and digital platforms, making digital technologies affordable for all sectors and for all segments of the population.
- 3. Bridging the digital divides:** Ensure equitable and affordable access to digital technologies and services and focus on bridging all the digital divides, including gender, age, language, educational, technological, cultural, geographical, social, and economic divides.

Strategic Initiatives:

By Member States:

1. Develop and enforce policies aimed at decreasing all barriers associated with digital technologies and services. Expand and enhancing digital infrastructure across all regions, especially into rural and underserved areas, while endorsing and supporting both public and private sector capabilities, in addition to all relevant stakeholders locally and globally.
2. Ensure that digital infrastructure development prioritizes universal access, enabling every African to connect to the Internet at affordable rates.

For All Stakeholders: Collaborate on initiatives that support the widespread dissemination of affordable digital services and technologies, fostering partnerships that leverage both innovation and investment.

Multilateral Organizations Are Encouraged: To support these endeavours through technical and financial assistance, as well as knowledge transfer, focusing on

enhancing accessibility and affordability of digital technologies.

Collaborative Framework

This pillar's development involved extensive consultations with stakeholders across Africa, including the public and private sectors, civil society, academia, and regional organizations. This inclusive approach ensures that the pillar reflects a wide range of perspectives and priorities, embodying a collective vision for Africa's digital future.

Moving Forward

The African Union Digital Compact calls for unified action among African nations, the private sector, civil society, and international partners. It envisions a digitally empowered Africa where digital technologies drive progress, inclusivity, and prosperity. This executive summary invites all stakeholders to join in realizing this vision, emphasizing that collective effort is essential for a sustainable and inclusive digital transformation across Africa.

This comprehensive approach to ensuring affordable access to digital technologies lays the groundwork for a transformative digital journey, marking a significant step towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and the aspirations of Agenda 2063. It underscores Africa's commitment to creating a digital environment that is inclusive, resilient, and capable of leveraging technology to drive socio-economic development.



Pillar Two: Expansion and Accessibility of Digital Infrastructure

In alignment with the guiding ethos of the African Union Commission and informed by the comprehensive analyses presented

in the African Digital Compact, Pillar Two is dedicated to ensuring the expansion and accessibility of digital infrastructure across the continent. This pillar is foundational to achieving a digitally empowered Africa, where connectivity serves as a catalyst for sustainable development, economic growth, and societal well-being.

Objective:

To ensure the provision of comprehensive, reliable, and high-speed internet access across Africa, including the most remote and underserved regions, thereby underpinning the digital economy and societal advancement.

Strategic Initiatives:

By Member States:

- 1. Investment Priority:** Accelerate investments in the development and modernization of digital infrastructure. This includes the expansion of broadband networks, the establishment of data centres, and the deployment of 5G technology to enhance connectivity and digital service delivery.
- 2. Policy and Regulatory Frameworks:** Develop and implement policy and regulatory frameworks that encourage investment in digital infrastructure. This involves the formulation of clear guidelines for public-private partnerships (PPPs) and incentives for private sector investments in infrastructure projects.

For All Stakeholders:

- 1. Collaboration and Partnerships:** Foster collaborations among governments, the private sector, civil society, and international partners to extend digital infrastructure. Emphasize the role of PPPs

in leveraging resources, expertise, and innovation from both public and private entities.

2. **Innovative Solutions:** Encourage the adoption of innovative technologies and approaches, such as satellite internet, to overcome geographical and infrastructural challenges in extending connectivity to underserved areas.

Multilateral Organizations Are Encouraged:

1. **Support and Expertise:** Provide technical and financial support to African nations in their efforts to expand and modernize digital infrastructure. This includes facilitating access to international best practices, technologies, and funding mechanisms.
2. **Capacity Building:** Assist in building the capacity of local institutions and workforce to manage, maintain, and secure digital infrastructure. This aims at ensuring sustainability and resilience of the infrastructure against cyber threats and other vulnerabilities.

Expected Outcomes:

1. **Universal Connectivity:** Achieve near-universal access to affordable and reliable internet services, significantly reducing the digital divide within and between African countries.
2. **Enhanced Digital Services:** Enable the provision of a wide range of digital services, including e-government, e-health, e-education, and digital financial services, thereby driving societal advancement and economic growth. In this regard, there is a need to expand national broadband coverage, ensure a conducive regulatory environment,

provision of logistical services through transformed digital postal services and provision of digital platforms to serve as a layer on which multiple public and private sector organizations can build new or better services and solutions.

3. **Economic Opportunities:** Stimulate economic opportunities by facilitating the growth of the digital economy, attracting investments, and fostering innovation and entrepreneurship in the ICT sector.
4. **Inclusive Growth:** Ensure that the expansion of digital infrastructure leads to inclusive growth, enabling all segments of society, particularly vulnerable and rural communities, to participate in and benefit from the digital economy. Furthermore, the expansion of affordable digital infrastructure and the deployment of the right e-commerce policies facilitate the inclusion of Africa's informal sector, and its integration in the local and global digital economies.

Pillar Two of the African Digital Compact seeks to establish a robust and accessible digital infrastructure as the backbone of Africa's digital transformation. Accelerating progress toward the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the AU Agenda 2063 requires inclusive digital transformation. **Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI)** can maximize the opportunities for digitalization to support the UN SDGs and the AU Agenda 2063 while reducing the risks that digital technologies may spark off. Through concerted efforts by all stakeholders, supported by conducive policies and innovative partnerships, Africa aims to leapfrog into a future where digital connectivity is a reality for all its citizens, driving progress towards the realization of the African Union's Agenda 2063 and the UN



Pillar Three: Leveraging Digital Technologies for Green, Resilient, and Inclusive Sustainable Development

Under the auspices of the African Union Commission, the establishment of a common African position on the United Nations Global Digital Compact is imperative to underscore Africa's commitment to leveraging digital technologies for sustainable development. This pillar, drawing inspiration from the African Union's Agenda 2063, the Digital Transformation Strategy for Africa, 2020-2030, the Malabo Convention on Cyber Security and Personal Data Protection, and the aspirations of the African Digital Compact, aims to harness the transformative power of digitalization to foster sustainable development, economic growth, and societal well-being across the continent. It is designed to inform and influence the deliberations at the Summit of the Future in September 2024, ensuring Africa's digital transformation agenda aligns with global standards while addressing the continent's unique challenges and opportunities.

Vision and Objectives

The vision is a digitally empowered Africa for Green, Resilient, and Inclusive Sustainable Socio-Economic Development. The objectives are to:

1. Encourage and support the development of digital solutions that utilize green and sustainable resources.
2. Motivate and empower indigenous digital innovations.
3. Leverage digitalization for a green, resilient, and inclusive sustainable socio-economic development.

4. Integrate digital solutions in environmental, economic, and social policies.

Strategic Imperative

Sustainable Digital Services: Leverage digital technologies to enhance service delivery in health, education, agriculture, and governance, contributing to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Africa's Agenda 2063.

Implementation and Collaboration

The successful implementation of this pillar requires a multi-stakeholder approach, involving African governments, the private sector, civil society, academia, and international partners. Collaboration is essential to mobilize resources, share knowledge, and align efforts towards a common goal. The African Union Commission will play a central role in coordinating these efforts, ensuring that the digital transformation agenda is integrated into national and regional development plans and strategies.

Leveraging digital technologies for a green, resilient, and inclusive sustainable socio-economic development is a cornerstone of Africa's vision for a prosperous future. Through the strategic imperatives outlined in this pillar, Africa seeks to harness the full potential of digitalization to drive economic growth, societal well-being, and inclusive sustainable development across the continent. As we move towards the Summit of the Future in 2024, it is crucial that Africa presents a unified stance that reflects our collective aspirations for a digitally empowered continent.

This common position on leveraging digital technologies not only aligns with the

broader goals of the African Union but also positions the continent as a key player in the global digital economy, ready to meet the challenges and seize the opportunities of the digital age.



Pillar Four: Cultivating a Digital Economy and Innovation Ecosystem

The African Union Digital Compact, guided by the ongoing work to develop the United Nations Global Digital Compact, Agenda 2063, the Africa Digital Transformation Strategy for 2020-2030, and the Malabo Convention, underscores the imperative of cultivating a digital economy and innovation ecosystem. This pillar represents a strategic commitment to transforming Africa into a vibrant digital economy that fosters innovation, supports entrepreneurship, and stimulates economic growth across the continent.

Objectives

- 1. Nurture Digital Entrepreneurship:** Foster an environment conducive to digital entrepreneurship and the growth of Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSMEs) through supportive policies, access to finance, and market opportunities.
- 2. Innovation Hubs and Digital Ecosystems:** Establish and strengthen digital hubs, technology incubators, and innovation ecosystems across the continent to spur technological innovation and digital solution development.
- 3. Job Creation and Economic Diversification:** Generate employment opportunities and diversify economic activities through the digital economy, focusing on youth and women.

4. Capacity Building and Skills Development:

Enhance digital literacy and skills among the African populace to prepare them for the digital economy and future job markets, with a special focus on job reassignment from the traditional jobs that may be negatively affected by the digital transformation and/or by emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence and robotics.

Strategic Actions

- 1. Policy and Regulatory Frameworks:** Advocate for and implement adaptive policy frameworks that support equitable access to digital opportunities, fostering innovation and addressing the rapid pace of technological development, as well as policies that create a favourable environment for digital businesses and startups. This includes simplifying business registration processes, offering tax incentives, and ensuring access to broadband and digital tools.
- 2. Innovation and Digital Entrepreneurship:** Promote the growth of a vibrant digital economy through support for innovation, start-ups, and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) within the digital sector.
- 3. Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs):** Encourage partnerships between governments, the private sector, and academia to support the development of digital infrastructure, innovation labs, technology incubators, and entrepreneurship programs.
- 4. Access to Finance:** Facilitate access to funding for digital entrepreneurs and SMEs through mechanisms such as venture capital, angel investing networks, and digital finance services.

5. **Capacity Building Programs:** Develop and implement comprehensive programs aimed at enhancing digital skills and entrepreneurship, including coding bootcamps, digital marketing courses, and business management training tailored to the digital age.
6. **Innovation Ecosystems:** Support the establishment and growth of innovation hubs, tech parks, and incubators that provide critical resources and services to startups, including mentorship, networking opportunities, and access to technology.
7. **Cross-Border Collaboration:** Promote regional integration and cooperation to facilitate the cross-border flow of digital services and harmonize digital policies, enhancing the continent's competitiveness in the global digital economy.
8. **Research and Development (R&D):** Support and empower R&D, knowledge transfer, cooperation, and partnerships with all stakeholders, local and global, to drive indigenous innovation in digital technologies and solutions that address Africa's unique challenges and opportunities.

Implementation and Monitoring

1. **Stakeholder Engagement:** Engage a wide range of stakeholders, including governments, the private sector, academic and research institutions, technical communities, civil society, regional and international organizations, to drive the implementation of this pillar.
2. **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Establish robust mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating the progress and impact of initiatives under this pillar, ensuring

alignment with the Compact's objectives and the agility to adapt to emerging trends and challenges.

3. **Capacity Building:** Continuously invest in, support, and empower capacity-building initiatives for policymakers, entrepreneurs, and institutions to sustain the growth and dynamism of Africa's digital economy, as well as in initiatives that focus on the growing youth population and on job re-assignment from the traditional jobs.

Cultivating a digital economy and innovation ecosystem is pivotal for Africa's socio-economic transformation. By implementing this pillar, the African Union commits to unleashing the potential of digital technologies to drive economic growth, create jobs, motivate, and foster innovation across the continent. The success of this endeavour requires collective effort, strategic partnerships, and a steadfast commitment to creating an enabling environment for digital entrepreneurship and innovation.



Pillar Five: Promotion of Digital Public Goods and Services

The African Union Digital Compact, underpinned by the principles of draft the United Nations Global Digital Compact, Agenda 2063, the Africa Digital Transformation Strategy for 2020-2030, and the Malabo Convention, aims to harness the transformative potential of digital technologies for sustainable development, economic growth, and societal well-being across Africa. This pillar focuses on the Promotion of Digital Public Goods and Services, emphasizing the development, sharing, and utilization of open-source digital resources to elevate public service delivery and spur innovation.

Vision and Objectives

Vision:

To establish a robust ecosystem of digital public goods and services that supports the delivery of inclusive, efficient, and innovative public services across Africa, thereby enhancing the quality of life for all Africans.

Objective 1:

Foster an enabling environment for the creation, dissemination, and utilization of digital public goods, integrating these resources into public service offerings.

Objective 2:

Support the development and adoption of open-source software and data platforms that can improve access to essential public services across the continent.

Strategic Initiatives

1. Development of Open-Source Platforms:

Member States are encouraged to prioritize and support initiatives aimed at creating open-source platforms that can be adapted and used by various public services, enhancing interoperability, and reducing costs.

2. Integration into Public Services:

The promotion of digital public goods should be integrated into the strategic planning of public services, ensuring that these resources are effectively utilized to improve service delivery. Given the capillarity of postal outlets and trust of local populations, the postal sector plays a significant role (a multipurpose platform and one stop shop) in socio-economic development, particularly in Africa in which 70% of the population live in rural areas, by facilitating communication, delivery of goods and services as well as providing wide universal access to

many governmental and non-governmental services.

3. Capacity Building and Knowledge Sharing:

- 3.1. Implement capacity-building programs for government officials and IT professionals in the public sector to develop, deploy, and manage digital public goods and services.
- 3.2. Establish a continental knowledge-sharing platform to facilitate the exchange of best practices, tools, and resources related to digital public goods. The platform should include a repository of capacity building needs in the African countries and available capacity building initiatives that African countries could benefit from.

4. Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs):

Foster partnerships between governments, the private sector, and academic and research institutions to co-create and innovate digital public goods that address specific public service challenges.

5. Standards and Guidelines for Digital Public Goods:

Develop and adopt standards and guidelines that ensure the accessibility, quality, security, reliability, availability, and usability of digital public goods, promoting confidence, trust, openness, and transparency among users and stakeholders.

6. Funding and Investment:

Secure funding and investment for the development and scaling of digital public goods, leveraging both domestic resources and international partnerships.

Implementation and Monitoring

- 1. Implementation Framework:** Develop a clear and actionable implementation framework that outlines roles, responsibilities, timelines, and resource allocations for the development and promotion of digital public goods and services.
- 2. Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E):** Establish an M&E mechanism to track progress, assess the impact of digital public goods on service delivery, and adjust strategies as necessary to ensure effectiveness and sustainability. The Promotion of Digital Public Goods and Services as a pillar of the African Digital Compact signifies a collective commitment to leveraging digital innovation for the public good. By fostering the development and utilization of open-source digital resources, Africa can enhance the accessibility and quality of public services, driving towards a digitally empowered continent that benefits all its citizens. This initiative calls for unified action, collaboration, and investment from all stakeholders to realize a sustainable and inclusive digital transformation across Africa.

Recommendations

- 1. Enhance Collaboration:** Strengthen partnerships across governments, the private sector, academia, and civil society to co-create and sustain digital public goods.
- 2. Increase Awareness and Adoption:** Conduct awareness campaigns to highlight the benefits of digital public goods and services, encouraging their adoption across public sectors.

- 3. Leverage International Support:** Engage with international organizations and development partners to gain technical and financial support for the development of digital public goods.

This pillar aligns with the overarching goals of the African Union Digital Compact, contributing to a cohesive and integrated digital ecosystem that supports Africa's socio-economic development and integration into the global digital economy.



Pillar Six: Enhancement of Cybersecurity and Data Protection

In the spirit of the African Union's dedication to fostering a secure and inclusive digital future, Pillar Six underscores the continent's commitment to elevating cybersecurity and data protection to paramount importance. This Pillar is conceived within the context of the African Union Digital Compact, inspired by the Malabo Convention on Cyber Security and Personal Data Protection, the Common African Position on the Application of International Law to the Use of Information and Communication Technologies in Cyberspace, and aligned with the African Union's Agenda 2063 and the Africa Digital Transformation Strategy for 2020-2030.

Objective:

To forge a secure, resilient, safe, and trustworthy digital environment across Africa by advancing comprehensive cybersecurity initiatives and safeguarding personal and sensitive information through continent-wide data protection regulations.

Strategic Initiatives:

- 1. Cybersecurity and Trust:** Establish a continental cybersecurity strategy and

operational mechanisms to protect digital infrastructure and ICT-enabled infrastructures in all sectors, especially in critical sectors, against cyber threats, fostering a secure, safe, and trustworthy digital environment for all users. A special focus needs to be direct towards identifying and protecting the ICT-enabled critical infrastructures.

2. Legislative and Regulatory Frameworks:

2.1. By Member States: Enact and enforce robust cybersecurity and data protection laws that adhere to the Malabo Convention's standards, ensuring a harmonized legal framework across the continent that protects against cyber threats and respects privacy rights.

2.2. For All Stakeholders: Engage in a collaborative process to develop, review, and refine national and regional cybersecurity policies and data protection regulations, promoting a culture of digital trust and security.

3. Conforming to the Protection of Peace, Stability and Good Governance:

By Member States:

3.1. Strong and effective engagement with international and regional **initiatives and contribution towards developing and implementing cyber norms and confidence building measures.**

3.2. Domestication of continental and regional conventions related to the use of the cyberspace for anti-peaceful activities such as hate speech, mis/disinformation, espionage, cybercrime,

cyberterrorism, and incitement of violence.

3.3. The creation and empowerment of Computer Emergency Response Teams (CERTs) – Cyber Security Incident Response Teams (CSIRTs) at the national level as well as in critical sectors, in partnership with all the relevant stakeholders, nationally and globally.

For All Stakeholders: Collaborate to create the synergy in preventing the African cyber space not to be a fertile ground for activities affecting the peace, stability, and good governance of the continent including the use of drones and unmanned aerial vehicles as well as artificial intelligence for enhancing military operations.

4. Capacity Building and Awareness:

By Member States:

4.1. Implement national strategies to strengthen the cybersecurity skills of the workforce and enhance public awareness about the importance of data protection and cybersecurity.

4.2. Launch national initiatives for capacity building and skills development, especially for CERT/CSIRT teams with national responsibilities, in partnership with all the relevant stakeholders, nationally, regionally, and internationally.

For All Stakeholders: Foster partnerships to support capacity-building initiatives, including cybersecurity training programs and public awareness campaigns, to build a knowledgeable and vigilant digital society.

5. Collaboration and Partnerships:

5.1. By Member States: Promote regional and international cooperation on cybersecurity, privacy, and data protection, including sharing best practices, intelligence sharing, and joint exercises to enhance collective defence capabilities.

5.2. For All Stakeholders: Encourage collaboration between governments, the private sector, academia, and civil society to strengthen the cybersecurity ecosystem and ensure the protection of data across all sectors.

6. Innovation and Technology Development:

6.1. By Member States: Support the development and adoption of innovative cybersecurity technologies and privacy-enhancing tools that cater to Africa's unique digital landscape challenges.

6.2. For All Stakeholders: Invest in research and development of indigenous cybersecurity solutions and data protection technologies to enhance Africa's digital sovereignty and resilience against cyber threats.

7. Standards and Best Practices:

7.1. By Member States: Adopt and promote international standards and best practices in cybersecurity and data protection, ensuring that digital infrastructures and services within the continent meet global security benchmarks.

7.2. For All Stakeholders: Collaborate to establish, disseminate, and implement guidelines on cybersecurity and data protection, tailored to the needs and contexts of African nations and businesses.

Implementation and Review:

The African Union Commission, in partnership with member states and relevant stakeholders, will oversee the implementation of this Pillar, ensuring that strategic initiatives are executed effectively and in alignment with the overarching goals of the African Digital Compact. Regular reviews will be conducted to assess progress, address emerging challenges, and adapt strategies to the evolving cybersecurity landscape, with the aim of achieving a secure, trustworthy digital Africa.

In realizing Pillar Six, the African Union reaffirms its commitment to safeguarding the digital rights of its citizens, enhancing the continent's cybersecurity posture, and ensuring a resilient digital future for all Africans. This Pillar not only addresses the imperative for robust security measures and data protection laws but also encapsulates Africa's collective resolve to harness digital technologies as a force for good, fostering sustainable development, economic growth, and societal well-being in the digital age.



Pillar Seven: Enhancement of Digital Skills and Literacy

Aligned with the aspirations of the African Union's Agenda 2063, the Africa Digital Transformation Strategy for 2020-2030, and the Malabo Convention on Cyber Security and Personal Data Protection, Pillar Seven focuses on enhancing digital skills and literacy across the continent. This pillar aims to equip

Africa's burgeoning youth population and the workforce at large with the necessary digital competencies to thrive in the digital economy, thereby fostering innovation, economic growth, and societal well-being.

Objectives

1. **Broaden Digital Literacy:** To ensure that all Africans, irrespective of age, gender, physical ability, or socio-economic status, possess fundamental digital literacy that enables them to navigate the digital world effectively and participate actively in the digital economy locally and globally.
2. **Skill Development for the Digital Economy:** To develop advanced digital skills that meet the evolving demands of the digital economy, emphasizing coding, cybersecurity, data analytics, and artificial intelligence (AI).
3. **Inclusive Digital Education:** To integrate digital skills and literacy into the educational systems at all levels—primary, secondary, and tertiary—ensuring that these programs are inclusive and accessible to everyone, including vulnerable and rural communities.
4. **Lifelong Learning and Upskilling:** To promote continuous learning and upskilling opportunities for the workforce, aligning with the dynamic nature of the digital sector and the future of work, as well as developing the special skills necessary for possible job re-assignments that may be triggered by the digital transformation and/or by the adoption of emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence and robotics.
5. **Address the Brain Drain:** develop and promote policies to attract and retain African Experts within the continent to

support the digital transformation and digital development of the continent.

Strategic Initiatives

1. **Curriculum Integration:** Advocate for the integration of digital literacy and advanced digital skills into national educational curricula, ensuring that these programs are designed to be inclusive and accessible, particularly among women, youth, and in rural areas, to ensure equitable participation in the digital economy.
2. **Teacher and Trainer Empowerment:** Launch capacity-building programs and training of trainers for educators and trainers to effectively impart digital skills, emphasizing pedagogical approaches suited to digital education.
3. **Public-Private Partnerships for Digital Education:** Foster partnerships between governments, the private sector, and non-governmental organizations to develop and deliver digital education programs, leveraging the strengths and resources of each sector.
4. **Online Learning Platforms and Resources:** Support the development and dissemination of high-quality, open-access digital learning platforms and resources that cater to a range of skills and competencies.
5. **Community Digital Hubs:** Establish community digital hubs, especially in underserved and rural areas, to provide access to digital learning resources and connectivity.
6. **Innovation in Digital Education:** Encourage innovation in digital education delivery, including mobile

learning solutions, gamification, and virtual reality (VR) to enhance engagement and learning outcomes.

- 7. Monitoring and Evaluation:** Implement robust monitoring and evaluation frameworks to assess the effectiveness of digital skills and literacy programs, ensuring they are responsive to the needs of learners and the demands of the digital economy.

Collaboration and Partnerships

- 1. Regional and Continental Collaboration:** Promote regional and continental initiatives to share best practices, resources, and learning materials on digital education and skills development.
- 2. International Cooperation:** Engage with international partners to leverage global expertise, resources, and innovative practices in digital education and skills training.
- 3. Sectoral Engagement:** Encourage active participation from all sectors—government, private, academia, and civil society—in shaping and implementing digital skills development strategies, ensuring that these efforts are aligned with labour market needs.

Pillar Seven of the African Digital Compact represents a cornerstone effort to empower the African population with the digital skills and literacy required for the 21st century. By fostering a digitally literate society and workforce, Africa can harness the full potential of its digital transformation, driving sustainable development, economic growth, and enhanced societal well-being. This pillar underscores the commitment of African nations to prepare their citizens for the opportunities and challenges of the digital age, ensuring that Africa's digital future is inclusive, resilient, and prosperous.



Pillar Eight: Development and Adoption of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Objective:

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is a transformative and revolutionary technology that has a huge potential to stimulate economic growth and support sustainable development by creating new industries, driving innovation, and generating employment opportunities, it impacts every sector ranging from finance, national security, health care, education, criminal justice, transportation, smart cities, private and public life.

To effectively Leverage AI Potential there is a need to address the societal, security, ethical and legal challenges associated with AI that may affect Africa society and people.

Vision and Strategic Objectives:

Ensure Africa-centric, development focused, Responsible and Ethical AI that Empowers People and Contributes to the Continent Inclusive Growth, Resilience and Socio-economic Progress.

The main Objectives associated with AI adoption in Africa are:

- Develop and implement robust AI governance, regulations, standards, codes of conduct and best practices to manage AI risks and promote its growth.
- Accelerate the integration of AI in the core sectors notably sectors with high social and economic value, including agriculture, education, health, climate change and natural resource management, and regional peace and security.

- Accelerate the adoption of AI by the private sector, including small and medium-sized enterprises and create an enabling environment for AI start-up ecosystem focused on solving Africa development problems.
- Ensure the availability of high-quality and diverse datasets to reflect Africa cultural identity and diversity, underpin AI development and ensure the availability of AI infrastructure, such as data centres, computing platforms, and IoTs to support the development of local AI-based systems, solutions and products.
- Encourage research and innovation and Promote inclusivity and diversity in AI skills and AI talent to prepare Africa's workforce of tomorrow.
- Promote regional and international cooperation to maximise the benefits of AI, minimise its risks, share capabilities and resources and ensure equal opportunities for African people and communities.

Key Policy interventions

1. Strengthen AI Governance:

- 1.1 Develop National AI Strategies and advance a multi-tiered governance and institutional approach.
- 1.2 Promote agile, forward-looking and risk-based regulations at national and regional levels that promote accountability and transparency in the design and deployment of AI Systems.
- 1.3 Establish oversight bodies at national and regional levels to monitor AI developments and ensure compliance with ethical standards and Africa values.

2. Optimizing AI Benefits for Socioeconomic Development

- 2.1 Promote the use of AI in key sectors to increase social and economic benefits such as public sector, education, health, agriculture and facilitate exchanges of knowledge and experience on use cases among AU Member States.
- 2.2 Raise awareness among Member States of the potential benefits of adopting AI to mitigate, adapt to, and build resilience against the risks of climate change.

3. Building Africa's AI Capabilities

- 3.1 Raise public awareness on the opportunities and challenges stemming from AI
- 3.2 Sensitize on the need for developing Africa-centric, diversified and reliable datasets, promote national and regional data pools and data markets to support the development of AI models that respond to Africa needs
- 3.3 Support academic and industry-led research initiatives focused on ethical and responsible AI development that addresses Africa's unique challenges and opportunities.
- 3.4 Develop inclusive and gender responsive policies on AI skills and competencies to leverage AI for socio-economic development.

4. Addressing the Risk and Threats Arising from AI

- 4.1 Work towards reducing biases and closing the gender, socio-economic, cultural and rural-urban gaps and ensure equity, justice and equal opportunities to all African citizens in the development and adoption of AI Systems
- 4.2 Develop Media and Information Literacy Policies to address the

AI generated mis-information, dis-information and hate speech to preserve the cohesion of African Societies, people well-being, national economies and democracies.

- 4.3 Upgrade cybersecurity measures to ensure highest standards of AI safety and security in the lifecycle of AI systems and solutions in Africa.
- 4.4 Assess the implication of AI on Africa Peace and Security landscape

5. Foster Public and Private Sectors cooperation and Investment in AI

- 5.1 Forge partnerships between the public and private sectors and increase investment in AI (research, skills, research and innovation ...)
- 5.2 Promote private sector AI readiness, create an enabling environment and provide guidance and policy actions, especially regarding small and medium enterprises' adoption of AI in the areas where the country has a comparative advantage.
- 5.3 Promote AI startups as engines of inclusive growth, thus ensuring all incentives are in place to attract and retain talent and enterprises in the region

6. Promote Regional and International Cooperation on AI

- 6.1 Foster intra-Africa cooperation on AI through exchange of AI expertise across the Continent, developing joint research programs and creating a network of centers of Excellence to address Africa needs.
- 6.2 Leverage AU Strategic Partnerships at the Multilateral Level to include

AI as area of cooperation work towards bridging the AI and technological gap between Africa and other regions.

- 6.3 Actively participate in International discussions on the global governance of AI to ensure African perspectives and interests are preserved;

Implementation and Collaboration:

- 1. Multi-Stakeholder Engagement:** Foster a collaborative approach by engaging all relevant stakeholders in the development, deployment, and governance of AI, ensuring a multi-disciplinary perspective that includes ethical, cultural, and socio-economic considerations.
- 2. Policy and Regulatory Frameworks:** Encourage Member States to develop and harmonize AI policies and regulations that reflect the principles outlined in the AU Strategy on Artificial Intelligence, ensuring a conducive environment for AI innovation and AI uptake across Africa.
- 3. Resource Allocation:** Mobilize resources, both financial and technical, to support research, development, and deployment of AI solutions that are in line with Africa local context and needs.
- 4. Monitoring and Evaluation:** Establish mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation of AI adoption by AU Member States towards the development of a consolidate AI ecosystem in Africa. The Ethical, responsible, Africa centric and development-oriented AI represents a critical pillar within the African Digital

Compact, reflecting Africa's commitment to harnessing AI as a force for good to transform its economy and society.



Pillar Nine: Safeguarding Digital Rights and Privacy

In alignment with the vision and purpose articulated in the African Union Digital Compact and under the guiding light of the ongoing work to develop the United Nations Global Digital Compact, Agenda 2063, the Digital Transformation Strategy for Africa (2020-2030), and the Malabo Convention, Pillar Nine is dedicated to "Safeguarding Digital Rights and Privacy." This pillar is a testament to our collective resolve to fortify the protection of digital rights and privacy for individuals across the African continent within a respectful and ethically governed digital environment, ensuring the integrity and confidentiality of personal information.

Objective:

To ensure the robust protection of digital rights and privacy, safeguarding the personal and sensitive data of all individuals within the digital space of Africa, thereby fostering a secure, trustworthy, and ethical digital environment that respects the privacy rights and freedoms of its citizens.

Strategic Initiatives:

1. Comprehensive Data Governance Framework and Data Protection Legislation:

1.1. Member States:

- 1.1.1. Lead in the development and enactment of

comprehensive digital rights and data protection legislation that adheres to the highest standards of privacy and data protection, ensuring these laws firmly support digital rights and robustly safeguard personal and sensitive information against unauthorized access and misuse.

- 1.1.2. Strengthen the framework for data protection to safeguard Africans' digital rights, ensuring privacy and data sovereignty are upheld.
- 1.1.3. Establish multistakeholder forums, with the support and participation of all the relevant stakeholders, to develop comprehensive responsible and interoperable data governance frameworks at the various levels and in all sectors.

- 1.2. **All Stakeholders:** Actively participate in awareness campaigns and educational programs aimed at reinforcing the importance of digital rights and privacy among the community, enhancing understanding and respect for privacy laws and regulations.

2. Privacy by Design and Default:

Member States and All Stakeholders:

Advocate for and implement the principles of 'privacy by design and by default' in the

development and deployment of digital technologies and services, ensuring that privacy safeguards are an integral part of the technology development lifecycle.

3. Public Awareness and Education:

- 3.1 Member States:** Launch comprehensive public awareness campaigns to educate citizens about their digital rights and the importance of data privacy, empowering individuals with the knowledge to navigate the digital space securely.
- 3.2. All Stakeholders:** Support educational initiatives that promote digital literacy with a focus on privacy and data protection, ensuring that individuals are informed and vigilant about their digital footprint and the protection of their personal information.

4. Cross-Border Data Protection Cooperation:

Member States: Engage in bilateral and multilateral agreements to ensure the protection of personal data across borders, respecting the privacy laws of other nations and fostering international cooperation in the enforcement of data protection laws.

5. Capacity Building and Technical Assistance:

Multilateral Organizations: Provide expertise, resources, and technical assistance to Member States in developing and enhancing their data protection frameworks, facilitating capacity-building efforts to enforce privacy laws effectively.

6. Monitoring, Evaluation, and Enforcement:

Member States: Establish independent data protection authorities tasked with monitoring compliance with data protection laws, evaluating the effectiveness of privacy measures, and enforcing laws through appropriate sanctions for violations.

Guiding Principles:

This pillar is anchored in the principles of inclusivity, equity, sustainability, and partnership, ensuring that efforts to safeguard digital rights and privacy are comprehensive and accessible to all, promoting equitable opportunities, and fostering resilience against cyber threats and technological disruptions.

By adopting and implementing Pillar Nine, we reaffirm our dedication to creating a digitally empowered Africa where technological advancements are harmonized with the fundamental rights and dignity of its people, echoing our commitment to a future where digital technologies serve as a cornerstone of prosperity, unity, and global participation.



Pillar Ten: Strengthening Global Digital Cooperation and Governance

The African Union's commitment to digital transformation, as manifested in the African Union Digital Compact, recognizes the profound implications of digital technologies on societal well-being, economic growth, and sustainable development across the continent. In synergy with the draft United Nations Global Digital Compact and informed by the comprehensive frameworks of Agenda 2063, the Africa Digital Transformation Strategy for 2020-2030, and

the Malabo Convention on Cyber Security and Personal Data Protection, the following articulation of Pillar Ten: Strengthening Global Digital Cooperation and Governance, is proposed to guide Africa's engagement in the global digital ecosystem.

Vision and Objective

The vision underpinning this pillar is to establish Africa as a pivotal player in global digital governance, ensuring that the continent's interests, perspectives, and unique challenges are effectively represented and addressed in international digital policy dialogues and frameworks. The objective is to enhance Africa's influence and participation in global digital governance, fostering a collaborative, inclusive, and equitable digital future that respects and upholds the digital rights of all global citizens.

Strategic Imperatives

1. Advocacy for Equitable Representation:

Advocate for fair and significant representation of African nations in international digital governance forums, ensuring that Africa's voice is heard, and its digital policy challenges and recommendations are included. This involves active participation in discussions shaping the international digital policy landscape, including but not limited to internet governance fora, cybersecurity norms, confidence building measures, and the ethical regulation of emerging technologies.

2. Policy Harmonization and Regulatory Frameworks:

Advocate for the harmonization of digital policies, laws, and regulations across member states to support a unified digital market in Africa,

facilitating seamless digital trade and interoperability.

3. Promotion of Multilateralism and Global Partnerships:

Strengthen global partnerships and cooperation on digital matters, emphasizing the importance of multilateralism in addressing global digital challenges and opportunities. This includes forging alliances with other regions, international organizations, and global stakeholders to promote shared principles and objectives for a safe, open, and inclusive digital world.

4. Harmonization of Digital Policies:

Work towards the harmonization of digital policies and standards at the global level, ensuring they align with Africa's digital transformation goals and principles. This effort should focus on creating a conducive global digital environment that supports sustainable development, respects digital rights, and fosters economic growth through digital trade and innovation.

5. Capacity Building and Knowledge Sharing:

Enhance Africa's digital governance capacity through targeted capacity-building initiatives, knowledge sharing, and the exchange of best practices with international partners. This aims to strengthen Africa's negotiation capabilities and technical expertise in global digital governance forums, enhancing the continent's ability to contribute effectively to global digital policy-making processes.

6. Safeguarding Digital Rights and Privacy:

Ensure the global digital governance framework adequately protects digital rights and privacy, advocating for international agreements and standards

that safeguard personal data, promote digital security, and uphold freedom of expression and information in the digital space.

- 7. Response to Global Digital Challenges:** Actively contribute to global efforts to address pressing and emerging digital challenges, such as cybersecurity threats, digital divides, misinformation, and the ethical implications of artificial intelligence (AI). Africa's participation should aim to ensure that global digital solutions are inclusive, equitable, and considerate of the diverse needs of all regions.

Implementation Framework

- 1. Diplomatic Engagement:** Leverage diplomatic channels to enhance Africa's presence and influence in international digital governance and cyber policies bodies and forums.
- 2. Stakeholder Collaboration:** Foster a multi-stakeholder approach within Africa to ensure a cohesive and united African stance on global digital issues, involving governments, private sector, civil society, and academia.
- 3. Policy Development and Advocacy:** Develop and advocate for policies and positions that reflect Africa's digital governance priorities, engaging with global policy-making processes and contributing to the development of international digital norms and standards.

Capacity-Building Programs: Establish and participate in capacity-building programs aimed at enhancing Africa's expertise and engagement in digital governance, negotiation, and policy formulation. Pillar Ten is a strategic imperative for Africa's digital transformation agenda. By actively engaging in and shaping

global digital governance, Africa can ensure its interests are protected and advanced, contributing to a digital future that is secure, inclusive, and prosperous for all. This pillar underscores Africa's commitment to fostering global digital cooperation, supporting global peace, security, and trust in the cyber space, advocating for equitable, inclusive, transparent, and open digital governance, and ensuring the continent plays a central role in the digital era.

These pillars represent a comprehensive strategy to harness digital technologies for Africa's sustainable development, economic growth, and societal well-being, aiming for a future where digital transformation is inclusive and benefits all Africans.

Guiding Principles of the African Digital Compact – African Context

The African Digital Compact is rooted in the principles of inclusivity, equity, sustainability, and partnership. These principles are designed to ensure that digital transformation efforts across Africa are comprehensive and accessible to all, promoting equitable opportunities and fostering resilience against cyber threats and technological disruptions.

The Compact emphasizes the importance of regional and international collaboration, innovation, and entrepreneurship, with a deep respect for Africa's cultural heritage and a commitment to social and economic well-being. In navigating the digital transformation journey, several guiding principles, deeply rooted in the African context, underpin our approach:

- 1. Inclusivity and Equity:** Ensuring that digital transformation efforts are inclusive, offering equitable opportunities for all Africans,

particularly vulnerable and rural communities.

- 2. Cybersecurity, Sustainability and Resilience:** Adopting strategies that ensure the sustainability of digital initiatives and resilience against cyber threats and technological disruptions.
- 3. Collaboration and Partnership:** Emphasizing the importance of regional and international collaboration to harness collective expertise, resources, and experiences for digital growth.
- 4. Innovation and Entrepreneurship:** Encouraging a culture of innovation and supporting digital entrepreneurship as catalysts for economic diversification and job creation across the continent.
- 5. Cultural Relevance and Social Impact:** Ensuring that digital transformation respects Africa's rich cultural heritage and directly contributes to social and economic well-being.

Vision, Purpose, and Scope

The UN Global Digital Compact policy brief emphasizes a vision of an open, free, secure, safe, trusted and human-centred digital future, underpinned by universal human rights, by over two decades of action connecting technology and sustainable development following the two-phased launch of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS: Geneva 2003- Tunis 2005) and the WSIS+20 Forum High-Level Events, and by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It advocates for multi-stakeholder cooperation, aiming to address digital divides, promote digital public services, ensure data empowerment, and govern artificial intelligence (AI) responsibly.

Based on the guidance from the draft UN Global Digital Compact, the African

Union's Agenda 2063, the Africa Digital Transformation Strategy, Malabo

Convention the vision, purpose, and scope for an African Digital Compact could be articulated as follows:

- 1. Vision:** An inclusive, resilient, and sustainable digital Africa that leverages ICTs for the continent's socio-economic development and integration, fostering innovation and digital rights for all its citizens, in alignment with Agenda 2063's aspirations for a prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development.
- 2. Purpose:** To foster multi-stakeholder digital cooperation within Africa and beyond, aligning with global standards and practices to bridge digital divides, enhance digital literacy, and ensure that digital technologies serve as a catalyst for achieving the SDGs and Agenda 2063 goals. The compact aims to promote digital inclusivity, protect digital rights, and ensure a safe and secure digital environment for all Africans.
- 3. Scope:** The Compact will encompass initiatives aimed at expanding digital infrastructure, improving access to digital services, enhancing data governance, fostering digital skills and education, promoting innovation and entrepreneurship, and ensuring robust cybersecurity measures.

It will involve collaboration among African states, the private sector, civil society, and international partners, to implement policies, regulations, and projects that support the digital transformation of Africa in a way that is inclusive, sustainable, and aligned with the continent's development objectives.

Strategic Objectives:

The goal of the African Digital Compact is to harness digital technologies for sustainable development, economic growth, and societal well-being across Africa. This involves leveraging the transformative potential of digitalization to catalyse growth across various sectors, enhancing Africa's contribution to the global workforce and economy, and addressing the unique challenges and opportunities presented by Africa's digital landscape. The objectives of the Proposed African Union Digital Compact are included:

- 1. Harness Digital Technologies for Sustainable Development:** The Compact aims to leverage the transformative potential of digital technologies to drive, empower and accelerate sustainable development across the continent.
- 2. Promote Economic Growth:** It seeks to enhance Africa's contribution to the global workforce and economy through digitalization, aiming to catalyse growth across various sectors.
- 3. Enhance Societal Well-being:** The initiative focuses on improving the quality of life for all Africans by utilizing digital technologies to enhance access to education, healthcare, e-government, and other critical services.
- 4. Address Unique Challenges and Opportunities:** Recognizing Africa's distinct digital landscape, the Compact intends to tackle the unique challenges and seize the opportunities presented by the digital era in Africa.
- 5. Leverage Digital Transformation as a force multiplier and a Catalyst for Development:** It underscores the importance of digital transformation as a key driver for socio-

economic and political reforms across the continent.

- 6. Bridge the Digital Divide:** The Compact commits to addressing the digital divides by expanding reliable and secure digital infrastructure, enhancing internet affordability, and promoting digital literacy and skills development.
- 7. Foster Innovation and Entrepreneurship:** Aiming to overcome the innovation divides, it supports the creation of digital hubs, innovation ecosystems, and public-private partnerships that encourage innovation and job creation in all sectors.
- 8. Strengthen Cybersecurity and Data Protection:** It calls for robust cybersecurity strategies and policies, effective data governance, and the protection of digital identities and rights to ensure a secure and ethically governed digital future.
- 9. Promote Inclusivity, Equity, and Partnership:** The Compact is built on the principles of inclusivity, equity, sustainability, and partnership, ensuring that digital transformation efforts are accessible to all and respect Africa's rich cultural heritage.
- 10. Align with Global and Regional Frameworks:** It aligns with global initiatives such as the UN's Global Digital Compact, the African Union's Agenda 2063, and the Africa Digital Transformation Strategy for 2020-2030, and The Malabo Convention, advocating for a future where digital technologies catalyse sustainable development and enhance societal well-being across Africa.

The objectives articulate a strategic framework for a unified approach to digital transformation in Africa, with a focus on creating a digital ecosystem that is inclusive,

equitable, and conducive to innovation and sustainable development.

Tactical Implementation Measures:

The proposed African Digital Compact, through the following pillars, articulates a vision for a digitally empowered Africa that is inclusive, sustainable, and innovative. It calls upon African nations and global partners to unite in a spirit of cooperation and mutual respect, forging partnerships that leverage digital technologies for the betterment of all societies. Together, we commit to a digital transformation journey that is reflective of our shared aspirations, guided by the wisdom of our ancestors, and strengthened by our unity.

- 1. Affordable Access to Digital Technologies:** Implement policies and initiatives aimed at attracting and supporting investments towards reducing the cost and enhancing the quality and reliability of digital services, ensuring accessibility for all segments of the population, especially in rural and underserved areas and among disadvantaged communities.
- 2. Application of Digital Technologies for Sustainable Development:** Integrate digital solutions into national development plans to enhance service delivery in critical areas such as health, education, agriculture, and environmental protection, driving sustainable growth.
- 3. Digital Ecosystems and Innovation:** Empower and support the local digital industry and promote the creation of digital hubs, incubators, and innovation ecosystems that support startups and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), facilitating access to finance, mentorship, and markets.
- 4. Digital Infrastructure Development and Access:** Invest in the expansion and upgrade of digital infrastructure to provide reliable and high-speed internet access across the continent, including remote areas.
- 5. Digital Public Goods and Services:** Encourage the development and sharing of open-source digital resources to improve public service delivery and foster innovation.
- 6. Cybersecurity and Data Protection:** Establish a continent-wide cybersecurity framework and develop harmonized policies for data governance, ensuring the protection of personal data and fostering trust in digital services.
- 7. Digital Skills and Literacy:** Launch comprehensive digital awareness campaigns and digital skill development programs at all levels, especially initiatives targeting both youth and adults to enhance employability, entrepreneurship, and innovation.
- 8. Ethical Development and Use of Artificial Intelligence:** Foster the development of AI technologies in accordance with ethical guidelines that prioritize societal well-being and protect individual rights.
- 9. Global Digital Cooperation and Governance:** Support the creation of global digital governance structures that ensure equitable representation and participation of African nations in international digital policy dialogues.
- 10. Protection of Digital Rights and Privacy:** Enact and enforce robust data protection laws and practices that safeguard personal privacy and uphold digital rights.

Bridging the Digital, Data, and Innovation Divides:

In the era of unparalleled digital advancement, the African Digital Compact confronts the formidable chasms of the digital, data, and innovation divides, embodying a pivotal stride towards the comprehensive digital transformation of the African continent. Recognizing these divides as profound barriers, the Compact elucidates a vision where equitable access to digital technologies, robust data governance, and an enabling environment for innovation form the bedrock of Africa's digital ecosystem. It is a commitment to transforming these challenges into opportunities for sustainable development, economic growth, and enhanced societal well-being. This introduction sets the stage for a detailed exploration of the measures and strategies the Compact proposes to bridge these divides, ensuring that Africa's

journey towards digital empowerment is inclusive, leaving no individual behind and harnessing digital technologies as a lever for the continent's prosperity and integration into the global digital economy.

- 1. Digital Divide:** The African Digital Compact recognizes the digital divide as a significant barrier to achieving comprehensive digital transformation across the continent. This divide, manifesting in unequal access to digital technologies, internet connectivity, and digital literacy, disproportionately affects the African population based on several factors including gender, age, education, physical abilities, and socio-economic level, especially in rural and vulnerable communities, impeding their full participation in the digital economy and society. The Compact commits to bridging this divide through targeted initiatives aimed at expanding digital infrastructure, enhancing internet



affordability and reliability, and promoting digital literacy and skills development. These efforts are designed to ensure that every African, irrespective of geographical location or socio-economic status, has equitable access to the benefits of digital transformation.

2. **Data Divide:** The Compact addresses the data divide, acknowledging the disparities in the ability to access, utilize, and benefit from data. This divide not only hinders informed decision-making and policy formulation but also limits the capacity for innovation and development tailored to Africa's unique challenges and opportunities. To bridge this divide, the Compact proposes the establishment of robust data governance frameworks, in alignment with AU Data Policy Framework, that ensure the availability, reliability, and accessibility of data. It emphasizes the importance of leveraging data for socio-

economic development, enhancing data protection, and fostering a culture of data literacy and analytics across the continent.

3. **Innovation Divide:** The innovation divide, characterized by unequal opportunities for engaging in and benefiting from digital innovation, poses a significant challenge to realizing the full potential of Africa's digital transformation. The African Digital Compact aims to overcome this divide by fostering an environment that supports digital entrepreneurship, innovation ecosystems, and public-private partnerships. It calls for investments in research and development, support for startups and SMEs, and the creation of policies that encourage innovation. Through these actions, the Compact seeks to catalyse the development of local solutions to local problems, promoting economic diversification and job creation in the digital age.



Chapter IV: Synergy with the Draft UN Global Digital Compact

A photograph of an elderly woman with a warm smile, wearing a vibrant orange and black patterned headwrap and matching dress. She is seated outdoors, with lush green trees in the background, and is focused on a laptop screen. A semi-transparent dark red box is overlaid on the image, containing a quote and a vertical green bar on the right side.

“ Sticks in a bundle are unbreakable. East African Proverb ”

This proverb highlights the strength and resilience derived from unity and collective action, which resonates deeply with the chapter’s focus on aligning the African Union’s digital strategies with global standards through the Draft UN Global Digital Compact. It underscores the importance of collaboration and coherence in digital governance to achieve sustainable development goals and enhance digital cooperation globally. This synergy allows Africa to actively shape global digital policies while addressing its unique challenges and opportunities, ensuring a secure, open, and prosperous digital future for all.

The objectives and Actions for an African Digital Compact must align with the UN Global Digital Compact to ensure global coherence in digital governance, facilitating the achievement of the sustainable development goals (SDGs) and enhancing digital cooperation. This synergy fosters the integration of African digital strategies with global norms and standards, promoting inclusive and equitable digital transformation. It enables Africa to contribute actively to shaping global digital policies while ensuring that its unique challenges and opportunities are addressed, thereby ensuring a secure, open, and prosperous digital future for all.

1. Digital Connectivity and Capacity-Build

1.1. **Objective:**

- 1.1.1. Enhance digital infrastructure and boost digital literacy across the continent.

1.2. **Actions:**

1.3. **Member States should:**

- 1.3.1. Attract and support investments in broadband infrastructure and implement policies for affordable internet access.

1.4. **All stakeholders should:**

- 1.4.1. Participate actively in the development of the digital infrastructure and digital services.
- 1.4.2. Collaborate on digital skill development programs.

1.5. **Multilateral organizations should:**

- 1.5.1. Provide technical and financial support for digital capacity-building initiatives.

2. Digital Cooperation to Accelerate Progress on the Sustainable Development Goals

2.1. **Objective:**

- 2.1.1. Leverage digital technologies to achieve the SDGs.

2.2. **Actions:**

2.3. **Member States should:**

- 2.3.1. Integrate digital solutions in various national and regional policies, including health, education, and economic policies.

2.4. **All stakeholders should:**

- 2.4.1. Foster partnerships for digital innovation in SDG-related projects.

2.5. **Multilateral organizations should:**

- 2.5.1. Facilitate knowledge exchange and support digital SDG initiatives.

3. Upholding Human Rights

3.1. **Objective:**

- 3.1.1. Ensure the respect of digital human rights.

3.2. **Actions:**

3.3. **Member States should:**

- 3.3.1. Enact and enforce legislation protecting online freedoms and privacy.

3.4. **All stakeholders should:**

- 3.4.1. Advocate for and adhere to ethical digital practices.

3.5. **Multilateral organizations should:**

- 3.5.1. Monitor and report on digital rights violations.

4. An Inclusive, Open, Secure and Shared Internet

4.1. **Objective:**

- 4.1.1. Promote an internet that is accessible to all, respects privacy, and is safe and secure against threats.

- 4.2. **Actions:**
 - 4.3. **Member States should:**
 - 4.3.1. Implement policies ensuring open and secure internet access for all communities.
 - 4.4. **All stakeholders should:**
 - 4.4.1. Contribute to developing secure and resilient digital infrastructures.
 - 4.5. **Multilateral organizations should:**
 - 4.5.1. Support international cooperation in cybersecurity and in the fight against cybercrimes.
5. Digital Trust and Security
- 5.1. **Objective:**
 - 5.1.1. Strengthen trust in digital ecosystems through enhanced security measures.
 - 5.2. **Actions:**
 - 5.3. **Member States should:**
 - 5.3.1. Adopt and enforce comprehensive cybersecurity strategies, policies, and legislation.
 - 5.4. **Multilateral organizations should:**
 - 5.4.1. Collaborate on developing and implementing security standards and guidelines.
 - 5.4.2. Facilitate the sharing of threat intelligence and best practices.
6. Data Protection and Data Governance
- 6.1. **Objective:**
 - 6.1.1. Safeguard personal data and empower individuals with control over their information.
 - 6.2. **Actions:**
 - 6.3. **Member States should:**
 - 6.3.1. Enact strong data protection legislation.
 - 6.3.2. Adopt broad and comprehensive data governance frameworks in various sectors.
 - 6.4. **All stakeholders should:**
 - 6.4.1. Participate in the development and implementation of data governance frameworks and privacy by design principles.
 - 6.5. **Multilateral organizations should:**
 - 6.5.1. Promote global data protection standards and best practices.
7. Agile Governance of AI, Quantum Computing, 5G and other Emerging Technologies
- 7.1. **Objective:**
 - 7.1.1. Ensure the indigenization and the ethical development and deployment of emerging technologies.
 - 7.2. **Actions:**
 - 7.3. **Member States should:**
 - 7.3.1. 7.1.1. Establish operational and regulatory frameworks that encourage innovation while protecting the public.
 - 7.3.2. 7.1.2. Support the creation of indigenous content and the local development of comprehensive digital goods and services.
 - 7.4. **All stakeholders should:**
 - 7.4.1. Engage in ethical technology R&D, knowledge exchange and technology transfer.
 - 7.5. **Multilateral organizations should:**
 - 7.5.1. Support capacity-building for governance of emerging technologies.

8. Global Digital Commons

8.1. **Objective:**

- 8.1.1. Promote the development and use of open-source technologies and digital public goods.

8.2. **Actions:**

8.3. **Member States should:**

- 8.3.1. Support the creation and dissemination of digital public goods.

8.4. **All stakeholders should:**

- 8.4.1. Contribute to the development of open standards and platforms.

8.5. **Multilateral organizations should:**

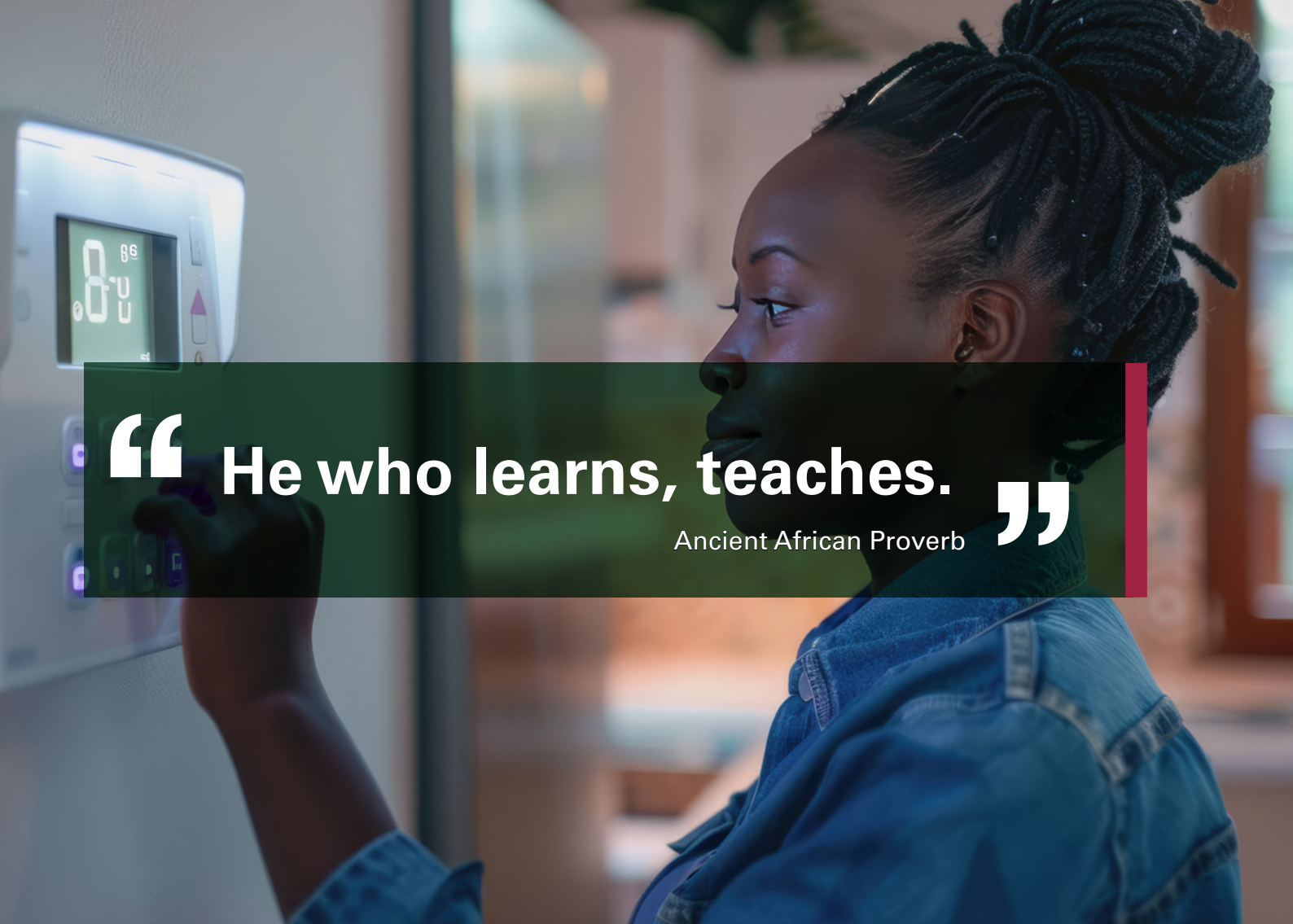
- 8.5.1. Facilitate international collaboration on digital public goods.

UN Global Digital Compact, this concluding segment heralds a resolute commitment to harmonizing the African digital landscape with global imperatives. Emphasizing connectivity, cooperation, human rights, inclusivity, security, data sovereignty, and the governance of emerging technologies, it lays the cornerstone for a digital Africa poised for transformation. This concerted effort promises not just to navigate but to lead in the global digital domain, fostering a digital ecosystem that is secure, open, and beneficial for all Africans. Herein lies our collective pledge: to ensure that Africa's digital journey is marked by inclusivity, innovation, and integrity, propelling us toward a future where every African is an integral part of the digital global village, their rights safeguarded, their potential unleashed, and their contributions valued on the world stage.

In synthesizing the ambitious agenda set forth in Chapter IV: Synergy with the draft



Chapter V: Implementation, Follow-up, and Review.

A woman with dark skin and her hair in a bun of dreadlocks is shown in profile, adjusting a modern, white smart thermostat on a wall. The thermostat's screen displays '8.8°C'. She is wearing a blue denim jacket. The background is a blurred indoor setting with warm lighting.

“ He who learns, teaches. ”

Ancient African Proverb

This proverb speaks to the cyclical nature of learning and sharing knowledge, which is crucial for the effective implementation of the Digital Compact. It reflects the ongoing process of capacity building, stakeholder engagement, and continuous adaptation to new challenges and technologies. This proverb underscores the importance of each stakeholder not only acquiring knowledge but also contributing to the collective understanding and capabilities of the community, thereby fostering a collaborative and progressive digital transformation across Africa.

This chapter outlines the strategic approach to implementing the African Union Digital Compact, ensuring robust follow-up mechanisms and periodic reviews to assess progress, address challenges, and adapt strategies to meet the evolving digital landscape of Africa. It emphasizes the collective commitment of African nations, in partnership with global stakeholders, to realize the vision of a digitally empowered continent.

1. Implementation Strategy

- 1.1. National and Regional Action Plans:** Development of detailed action plans at both national and regional levels, aligned with the Compact's objectives, to guide the implementation process.
- 1.2. Resource Mobilization:** Strategies for mobilizing financial, technical, and human resources necessary for the execution of digital transformation initiatives.
- 1.3. Capacity Building:** Initiatives aimed at enhancing the digital skills of the workforce and **strengthening** institutional capacities across the continent.
- 1.4. Partnership and Collaboration:** Frameworks to foster cooperation among African countries, and between Africa and international partners, to leverage global best practices and resources.

2. Follow-up Mechanisms

- 2.1. Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Framework:** Establishment of a

comprehensive M&E framework to regularly assess progress, with clear metrics and indicators for **success**.

- 2.2. Reporting Systems:** Implementation of standardized reporting systems for countries and regions to share updates, insights, and best practices.
- 2.3. Stakeholder Engagement:** Continuous engagement with all stakeholders, including governments, private sector, civil society, and communities, to ensure **inclusivity** and collective ownership of the digital transformation process.

3. Review and Adaptive Management

- 3.1. Periodic Reviews:** Scheduled reviews at regular intervals to evaluate the impact of the **Compact**, based on the M&E framework.
- 3.2. Adaptive Management:** Mechanisms to adapt strategies and action plans based on review outcomes, emerging trends, and new opportunities in the digital sector.
- 3.3. Policy and Strategy Updates:** Recommendations for updating policies and strategies to address gaps, challenges, and the dynamic nature of the digital ecosystem.

4. Role of Key Actors

- 4.1. African Union Commission:** Leadership in coordinating the Compact's implementation, fostering partnerships, and providing policy guidance.
- 4.2. Member States:** Responsibility for formulating **and** implementing national action plans, resource allocation,

and creating enabling environments for digital transformation; with multistakeholder participation and contribution.

- 4.3. **Private Sector and Civil Society:** Active participation in **implementation**, innovation, and providing feedback for the Compact's continuous improvement.
- 4.4. **Academia:** Provide the intellectual and human resource pipelines, with the requisite research and development activities to support a related innovation **ecosystem** that make the Compact's goals achievable.
- 4.5. **International Partners:** Support in terms of knowledge and technology transfer, **capacity** building, and financial

assistance, aligned with the Compact's goals.

This chapter underscores the commitment to a systematic, inclusive, and dynamic approach to implementing the African Union Digital Compact. Through diligent follow-up, adaptive management, and the collective effort of all stakeholders, Africa aims to harness the power of digital technology for sustainable development, economic growth, and the well-being of its people. The journey towards a digitally transformed Africa is a shared responsibility, requiring unwavering dedication, collaboration, and innovation at every step.



Chapter VI: Multi-Stakeholder Implementation.



“ Rain does not fall on one roof alone African Proverb ”

In accordance with the African proverb, **“Rain does not fall on one roof alone”**¹ due to the interconnectedness of systems, a vulnerability in one part of our ecosystem can affect the entire network, therefore a comprehensive and holistic security approaches are necessary. This chapter builds upon the paradigm of multi-stakeholder collaboration as the linchpin for the successful implementation of the African Digital Compact. This chapter underscores the imperative of harnessing collective expertise, resources, and commitment across a broad spectrum of stakeholders to actualize the vision of a digitally inclusive and empowered Africa.

¹. <https://www.quotespedia.org/authors/c/cameroon-proverbs/rain-does-not-fall-on-one-roof-alone-african-proverb/>

1. Framework for Multi-Stakeholder Engagement

1.1. Multistakeholder Processes:

Promote the establishment of multi-stakeholder processes for deliberation of internet public policy (digital governance) matters at the national, regional, continental, and global levels. This will enable a bottom-up process with the aim to formulate common African positions on emerging Internet Governance / Digital Governance matters and help shape policy development at the global level by ensuring that Africa's voice is heard at these platforms.

1.2. Governance Structure: Establish a governance framework that ensures effective coordination, oversight, and accountability among all stakeholders. This framework will include representation from African governments, private sector, civil society, academic institutions, international partners, and regional organizations.

1.3. Stakeholder Roles and

Responsibilities: Define clear roles and responsibilities for each stakeholder category, ensuring their contributions align with the Compact's strategic objectives. This includes policy formulation, infrastructure development, capacity building, innovation support, and cybersecurity enhancement.

1.4. PPP Partnership Models: Develop and promote partnership models that encourage collaboration across all sectors, leveraging public-private partnerships (PPPs), joint ventures, and collaborative research and development initiatives to drive digital transformation.

2. Implementation Mechanisms

2.1. Regional and Continental Platforms:

Leverage existing regional and continental platforms, such as the African Union's Specialized Technical Committees (STCs), to facilitate dialogue, share best practices, and coordinate digital transformation efforts across the continent.

2.2. Monitoring and Evaluation

Framework: Implement a robust monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework to track progress, assess impact, and recalibrate strategies as necessary. This framework will include key performance indicators (KPIs) aligned with the Compact's objectives, and metrics for tracking the economic impacts of Africa's digital transformation.

2.3. Resource Mobilization: Identify and mobilize financial and non-financial resources necessary for the Compact's implementation. This includes exploring innovative financing mechanisms, such as digital bonds, blended finance, and crowdfunding platforms.

3. Capacity Building and Knowledge Sharing

3.1. Digital Skills Development: Launch continent-wide initiatives aimed at enhancing digital literacy and skills, targeting youth, women, and underserved communities to ensure they can participate fully in the digital economy.

3.2. Innovation and Entrepreneurship Support: Establish incubators, accelerators, and innovation hubs across the continent to nurture digital entrepreneurship and support

the growth of start-ups and SMEs in the digital domain.

- 3.3. Knowledge Sharing and Best Practice Exchange:** Foster a culture of learning and adaptation by facilitating the exchange of knowledge, best practices, and lessons learned among stakeholders through workshops, conferences, and digital platforms.

4. Ensuring Inclusivity and Equity

- 4.1. Inclusive Policy Formulation:** Engage a broad range of stakeholders in the policy formulation process to ensure policies are inclusive, equitable, and reflective of the diverse needs and aspirations of the African population.
- 4.2. Digital Access for All:** Prioritize initiatives that expand digital access to rural and underserved

communities, ensuring no one is left behind in Africa's digital transformation journey.

- 4.3. Protection of Digital Rights:** Advocate for the protection of digital rights, emphasizing privacy, data protection, and freedom of expression in the digital space.

The multi-stakeholder implementation approach embodies the spirit of African unity and collaboration, essential for realizing the ambitious goals of the African Digital Compact. By fostering a collaborative ecosystem, we pave the way for a sustainable digital transformation that benefits all segments of African society, driving towards a future where digital technology is a catalyst for inclusive growth, innovation, and prosperity. Together, we will harness the collective strength of our diverse stakeholders to build a digitally empowered Africa.



Chapter VII: A Proposed African Digital Cooperation Forum.



“ Sticks in a bundle are unbreakable. ”

East African Proverb

This proverb highlights the strength and resilience derived from unity and collective action, which resonates deeply with the chapter’s focus on aligning the African Union’s digital strategies with global standards through the Draft UN Global Digital Compact. It underscores the importance of collaboration and coherence in digital governance to achieve sustainable development goals and enhance digital cooperation globally. This synergy allows Africa to actively shape global digital policies while addressing its unique challenges and opportunities, ensuring a secure, open, and prosperous digital future for all.

In the ethos of collective progress and digital unity, the African Union Digital Compact introduces the **African Digital Cooperation Forum (ADCF)** as a *Pioneering Platform for Multi-stakeholder Engagement, Collaboration, and Innovation in the Digital Sphere*. This forum embodies the African proverb, “Unity is strength, division is weakness.”² “Serving as a **Knowledge Broker** and an **Investment Facilitator** for collaborative ADC programs and projects, and a conduit for harmonizing digital initiatives across the continent and beyond.

1. African Digital Cooperation Forum (ADCF) Objectives

The ADCF aims to:

- 1.1. **Provide a platform for facilitating cooperation and formulating programs and projects relating to the ADC:** Create an inclusive space for multi-stakeholder dialogue among African states, private sector entities, civil society, and international partners to share insights, strategies, and best practices in digital transformation, and to cooperate towards the formulation and implementation of related programs and projects, with the support of donors and of investors from within Africa as well as from the international community
- 1.2. **Promote Digital Policy Harmonization:** Work towards the alignment of digital policies and regulations across the continent, facilitating a cohesive digital market and society in Africa.
- 1.3. **Enhance Digital Skills and Literacy:** Spearhead initiatives for digital

education and capacity building, targeting both the youth and the adult population to prepare them for the digital economy, with a special focus on job reassignment from the traditional jobs that may be negatively affected by the digital transformation and/or by emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence and robotics.

- 1.4. **Drive Innovation and Entrepreneurship:** Support the development of investment strategies in advanced digital infrastructures like AI to ensure Africa’s digital economies remain competitive on a global scale, and encourage the development of digital hubs, incubators, and innovation labs to support startups and SMEs, fostering a culture of technological innovation and entrepreneurship.
- 1.5. **Strengthen Cybersecurity Frameworks:** Collaborate on the development of a pan-African cybersecurity strategy and operational mechanisms to safeguard digital infrastructure and data across the continent.
- 1.6. **Advance Digital Inclusion:** Ensure that digital transformation efforts are inclusive, offering equitable access to digital technologies, particularly for vulnerable and rural communities.

2. Governance Structure

- 2.1. The ADCF will be governed by a high-level **Advisory Board** and a Steering Committee comprising

² <https://www.proverbshub.com/african-topic/unity/>

representatives from the African Union Commission, member states, the private sector, civil society, and international partners. The board will be responsible for setting the forum's strategic direction, and the steering committee will be facilitating collaboration among stakeholders and overseeing the formulation and implementation of programs and projects.

3. Implementation Mechanisms

3.1. Annual Forum: Host an annual ADCF summit to assess progress, showcase the ADC programs and projects, discuss emerging digital trends, and align on future priorities.

3.2. Working Groups: Establish thematic working groups focused on key areas such as digital education, cybersecurity, digital health, and fintech, among others.

3.3. Policy Lab: Create a policy innovation lab to draft, test, and refine digital policies and regulations, ensuring they are adaptive and responsive to the needs of a dynamic digital landscape.

3.4. Partnership Network: Develop a network of partnerships with regional and global organizations, leveraging their expertise and resources to support the forum's objectives.



4. Strategic Priorities

- 4.1. Digital Infrastructure:** Advocate for and support the development of robust digital infrastructure as the backbone of Africa's digital economy.
- 4.2. Cross-Border Collaboration:** Enhance cross-border data flow and digital services, promoting regional integration and economic growth.
- 4.3. Sustainable Development:** Leverage digital technologies to address socio-economic challenges and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Agenda 2063 targets.

The African Digital Cooperation Forum will stand as a testament to Africa's commitment to a unified and strategic approach towards digital transformation. By fostering collaboration, harmonizing digital policies, and promoting innovation, the ADCF aims to propel Africa towards a future where digital technologies drive sustainable development, economic prosperity, and societal well-being for all its citizens. Together, we forge a path towards a digitally empowered Africa, resonating with the spirit of unity, innovation, and progress.



Chapter VIII: Recommendations and Closing Statements.



“Wisdom does not come overnight.” Ancient African proverb

This proverb captures the essence of patience, continuous effort, and the progressive nature of implementing such a comprehensive digital strategy as outlined in the Compact. It emphasizes that success in integrating digital technologies across Africa to achieve sustainable development, economic growth, and societal well-being requires time, persistence, and collective learning. This proverb underscores the importance of gradual improvement and strategic follow-through, highlighting the need for ongoing capacity building, policy refinement, and multi-stakeholder collaboration to realize the vision of a digitally empowered continent.

1. What does success for the African Union Digital Compact look like.

- 1.1. Success for the African Union Digital Compact is defined by comprehensive societal and economic integration of digital technologies, leading to improved access to digital services especially in education, healthcare, and government; enhanced connectivity and digital literacy across rural and urban divides; robust cybersecurity measures protecting citizens and their data; a vibrant local technology ecosystem fostering innovation and entrepreneurship; significant contributions to the GDP from the digital economy; and equitable participation in the global digital economy. This success aligns with the African Union's vision for a digitally empowered continent where technological advancements drive sustainable development, inclusivity, and resilience.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. To realize the vision articulated in the African Union Digital Compact, the following strategic recommendations are proposed:
- 2.2. **Enhance Digital Infrastructure:** Prioritize the development and expansion of digital infrastructure, through coherent multistakeholder partnerships, to ensure universal and affordable access to digital technologies, especially in underserved and rural areas.
- 2.3. **Promote Digital Literacy and Skills Development:** Implement continent-wide initiatives to boost public digital awareness, enhance digital literacy and develop the

digital skills necessary for the future workforce, with a special focus on job reassignment from the traditional jobs that may be negatively affected by the digital transformation and/or by emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence and robotics. Thus, empowering all Africans to participate in the digital economy.

- 2.4. **Foster Digital Innovation:** Support the growth of digit entrepreneurship and innovation ecosystems across the continent to stimulate economic diversification and job creation in the digital sector.
- 2.5. **Strengthen Cybersecurity, Privacy and Data Governance:** Develop and implement robust cybersecurity and data governance strategies, policies, and frameworks, as well as privacy and data protection laws to safeguard the digital space, build trust among users, and protect sensitive information.
- 2.6. **Harmonize Digital Policies and Regulations:** Encourage the harmonization of digital policies, regulations, and standards across African nations to facilitate seamless cross-border digital transactions and collaborations.
- 2.7. **Bolster Multilateral and Global Partnerships:** Strengthen Africa's engagement in global digital governance to ensure the continent's interests and perspectives are adequately represented and to foster international cooperation in digital development.
- 2.8. **Establish an African Digital Cooperation Forum (ADCF)** as a Pioneering Platform for

Multi-stakeholder Engagement, Collaboration, and Innovation in the Digital Sphere. This forum Serves as a **Knowledge Broker** and an **Investment Facilitator** for collaborative ADC programs and projects, and a conduit for harmonizing digital initiatives across the continent and beyond.

- 2.9. **Partnerships and Cooperation:** foster cooperation among African countries, and between Africa and international partners, to leverage global best practices, resources and build trust between nations.

3. Closing Statements

As we reach the culmination of the Proposed African Union Digital Compact,

it is evident that the journey towards digital transformation in Africa is both ambitious and necessary. Anchored in the collective wisdom of the African continent and inspired by the spirit of unity encapsulated in the proverb, “We desire to bequeath two things to our children; the first one is roots, and the other one is wings.”³ This Compact serve as a roadmap for harnessing digital technologies to foster sustainable development, economic growth, and societal well-being across Africa.

The Compact not only addresses the challenges posed by the digital divides but also seizes the opportunities digitalization presents for innovation, cybersecurity, and inclusive access to



³. <https://yen.com.gh/facts-lifehacks/quotes-messages/235067-inspirational-african-proverbs-family-unity-about/>

technology. It is a testament to the African Union's commitment to a future where digital technologies are a cornerstone of prosperity, unity, and global participation.

4. Moving Forward

The journey ahead is paved with challenges and opportunities alike. As we embrace the transformative power of digital technologies, it is imperative that we move forward together, leveraging the collective strength, wisdom, and resources of the African continent and its global partners.

The success of the African Union Digital Compact hinges on our shared commitment to collaboration, innovation,

and inclusivity. By working together, we can overcome the barriers to digital transformation and unlock the full potential of digital technologies for the benefit of all Africans.

In this spirit, let us recommit ourselves to the principles and objectives of the Compact, and continue to work tirelessly towards a digitally empowered Africa that resonates with prosperity, unity, and global participation.

"Together, we go far" – this adage embodies our collective journey towards a brighter, more connected, and digitally inclusive future for Africa.



Appendix I: Elements of Guidance to African Countries in Anticipation of the Forthcoming UN Global Digital Compact Negotiations.

I. Preamble

Recalling the visionary aspirations of Agenda 2063, the Africa Digital Transformation Strategy for 2020-2030, the African Continental Free Trade Area, the AU Data Policy Framework, and the Malabo Convention on Cyber Security and Personal Data Protection, and supporting the evolving digital landscape underpinned by the Draft United Nations Global Digital Compact. This Common Position embodies Africa's collective resolve to navigate the digital era's complexities, embracing innovation while safeguarding digital sovereignty and advancing sustainable development across the continent.

Recognizing the indispensable role of digital technologies in fostering socio-economic growth, enhancing governance, and enabling a participatory digital democracy. These technologies serve not merely as tools for advancement but as catalysts for a transformative societal ethos, promoting inclusivity, equity, and access to digital dividends for all Africans.

Further acknowledging the dual imperative to protect the digital commons against emerging threats while leveraging digital opportunities for the collective good. This entails a commitment to strengthening cybersecurity, data protection, and privacy frameworks, ensuring a safe, secure, and trustworthy digital environment for individuals and communities alike. Reaffirming the principle of universal digital access as a fundamental right, integral to

realizing the aspirations of Agenda 2063. The African Union, through this Common Position, pledges to bridge digital divides, enhance digital literacy, and foster an environment conducive to innovation and entrepreneurship.

Emphasizing the need for a collaborative, multi-stakeholder approach to digital governance, which respects the sovereignty of states while encouraging regional and international cooperation. This approach recognizes the interconnected nature of digital challenges and opportunities, advocating for equitable participation in global digital policy discourses.

Underlining the strategic importance of digital infrastructure as the backbone of the digital economy, with a commitment to expanding access to affordable, reliable, and high-speed internet services across the continent. This infrastructure serves as the foundation for digital inclusion, economic diversification, and the realization of the digital single market for Africa.

Highlighting the role of digital technologies in enhancing service delivery in all sectors, especially in critical sectors including health, education, agriculture, energy, manufacturing, transportation, and government sectors. The African Union champions the deployment of digital solutions that improve the quality of life for its citizens, driving towards the Sustainable Development Goals and a prosperous digital future.

These Elements of Guidance sets forth our collective vision and strategic imperatives,



guiding our engagement in the global digital ecosystem. It reflects our determination to harness the power of digital transformation for sustainable development, socio-economic growth, and the enhancement of societal well-being across the continent.

In presenting this position, we invite the global community to join us in fostering a digital era characterized by openness, inclusion, safety, security, trust, resilience, cooperation, partnership, and shared prosperity. Together, we can achieve a digitally empowered Africa that actively shapes and benefits from the global digital landscape.

II. Pillars

Elements to support The African Common Position in the development and negotiation of the United Nations Global Digital Compact is articulated through ten foundational pillars. These pillars are designed to address the multifaceted aspects of digital transformation, ensuring it catalyses inclusive growth, equity, sustainability, and effective partnerships across the continent. Reflecting the collective aspiration of African nations, these pillars aim to harmonize efforts towards a continent-wide digital revolution.

Pillar One: Ensuring Affordable Access to Digital Technologies

Recognizing the critical role of digital technologies in achieving sustainable development and bridging the digital divide, this pillar focuses on enhancing

affordability and accessibility. It aligns with Africa's Agenda 2063, the Africa Digital Transformation Strategy 2020-2030, and the Malabo Convention, underpinning our commitment to a digitally inclusive Africa.

Pillar Two: Expansion and Accessibility of Digital Infrastructure

Essential to achieving digital transformation, this pillar prioritizes the development and modernization of digital infrastructure, and the support of the ICT-enabled infrastructures. It calls for empowered public-private partnerships, expanded investments, supportive policies, and innovative solutions to enhance connectivity and ensure universal access to digital services.

Pillar Three: Leveraging Digital Technologies for Sustainable Development

This pillar emphasizes the strategic use of digital technologies to foster green, resilient, and inclusive development. It seeks to integrate digital solutions across economic, social, and environmental domains, thereby advancing the continent's sustainable development goals in harmony with global standards.

Pillar Four: Cultivating a Digital Economy and Innovation Ecosystem

Aiming to transform Africa into a dynamic digital economy, this pillar focuses on nurturing digital entrepreneurship, indigenous innovation, and SME growth. It underscores the importance of supportive policies, access to finance, and fostering

a conducive environment for local digital businesses and startups supported by strong global partnerships.

Pillar Five: Promotion of Digital Public Goods and Services

This pillar champions the development, sharing, and utilization of open-source digital resources to elevate public service delivery and innovation. It emphasizes the creation of a robust ecosystem of digital public goods that supports inclusive and efficient public services.

Pillar Six: Enhancement of Cybersecurity and Data Protection

Acknowledging the paramount importance of a secure and trusted digital environment, this pillar focuses on strengthening cybersecurity strategies, policies, and initiatives, especially for the protection of the ICT-enabled infrastructures, and for safeguarding personal and sensitive information across the continent. It also calls for establishment and the empowerment of CERT/CSIRT teams, especially at the national level and in key sectors.

Pillar Seven: Enhancing Digital Skills and Literacy

To equip Africans with the necessary digital competencies for the digital economy, this pillar prioritizes the integration of digital literacy and skills into educational systems. It aims to foster Africa's innovation, economic growth, and societal well-being by preparing the workforce for the future job market, while addressing the potential impact of emerging digital technologies on the traditional job market

Pillar Eight: Ethical Development and Application of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

This pillar emphasizes the ethical creation, deployment, and utilization of AI technologies and other emerging digital technologies, focusing on societal welfare, equity, transparency, and accountability. It advocates for the development of continental guidelines on ethical AI and fosters research and innovation within ethical frameworks.

Pillar Nine: Safeguarding Digital Rights and Privacy

Dedicated to the robust protection of digital rights and privacy, this pillar underlines the commitment to safeguarding personal and sensitive data. It calls for comprehensive data protection legislation and emphasizes the importance of respecting privacy rights and freedoms in the digital space.

Pillar Ten: Strengthening Global Digital Cooperation and Governance

Aiming to position Africa as a pivotal player in global digital governance and digital policies, this pillar seeks to enhance Africa's influence and participation in international digital policy dialogues. It focuses on advocacy for equitable, open, transparent, and inclusive representation and the harmonization of digital policies and standards.

These pillars form the core of the African Common Position on the United Nations Global Digital Compact, reflecting a strategic roadmap for leveraging digital transformation as a catalyst for inclusive and sustainable development across the continent.

III. Guiding Principles – African Context

The formulation of an African Common Position on the United Nations Global Digital

Compact rests on foundational guiding principles that reflect the continent's unique perspectives, aspirations, and challenges. These principles, deeply interwoven with the ethos of the African Union and its member states, aim to ensure a digital transformation that is inclusive, sustainable, secure, and beneficial for all Africans.

1. Respect for Sovereignty and Territorial Integrity:

The sovereignty and territorial integrity of states form the bedrock of international relations and digital governance. This principle underscores the right of states to govern their cyberspace without external interference, ensuring the respect for their digital borders in the same manner as their physical borders. States are obliged not to allow their territory to be used for acts contrary to the rights of other states, emphasizing the importance of sovereignty in the digital era.

2. International Cooperation and Solidarity:

Recognizing the global nature of cyberspace, this principle emphasizes the need for enhanced international cooperation and solidarity, particularly in combating cyber threats and crimes. The African Union advocates for collective efforts and the sharing of resources, expertise, and best practices to address the challenges and opportunities presented by digital technologies, highlighting the role of capacity-building and technical assistance in bridging the digital divides.

3. Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms:

The protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the digital space is paramount. This principle reaffirms the applicability of international human rights law in cyberspace, emphasizing the need to safeguard

personal privacy, freedom of expression, and the right to access information. It calls for measures to prevent and mitigate the adverse human rights impacts of digital activities, ensuring a human-centred approach to digital development.

4. Due Diligence and Accountability:

States have an obligation to exercise due diligence to prevent, investigate, and redress harm caused by cyber activities originating within their territory. This principle highlights the importance of accountability for internationally wrongful acts committed through ICTs, advocating for the development of norms and measures that promote responsible state behaviour in cyberspace.

5. Peaceful Settlement of Disputes:

The peaceful resolution of conflicts arising from the use of ICTs is a core tenet of this guiding principle. It underscores the commitment to settle digital disputes through negotiation, mediation, arbitration, and other peaceful means, in accordance with international law. This principle advocates for the use of ICTs to enhance dispute resolution mechanisms and promote a stable and peaceful digital environment.

6. Non-Intervention:

The principle of non-intervention is critical in ensuring that states do not use ICTs to interfere in the internal affairs of other states. It prohibits acts of coercion in cyberspace that seek to influence the policy or conduct of states, affirming the sovereignty of nations to determine their own digital and developmental paths without external pressure or interference.

These guiding principles, rooted in the African context and reflecting the collective

aspirations of the continent, aim to steer the digital transformation towards a future that is secure, inclusive, and beneficial for all Africans. They underscore the continent's commitment to fostering a digital environment that respects sovereignty, enhances cooperation, protects human rights, ensures accountability, resolves disputes peacefully, and upholds the principle of non-intervention. Through these principles, Africa seeks to harness the potential of digital technologies for sustainable development, economic growth, and the enhancement of societal well-being, positioning itself as a proactive and responsible stakeholder in the global digital ecosystem.

IV. Synergy with the UN Global Digital Compact

In synergy with the UN Global Digital Compact, the African Union presents an African Common Position, embodying a commitment to a coherent digital future that resonates with global objectives while honouring the unique perspectives and needs of Africa. This synergy articulates our collective ambition for digital transformation that is inclusive, transparent, sustainable, safe, and secure, fostering an environment where technological progress serves as a catalyst for comprehensive development.

1. Digital Connectivity and Capacity-Building

- 1.1. **Objective:** To significantly enhance digital infrastructure and elevate digital literacy across Africa, ensuring universal access to and effective utilization of digital technologies and the internet.
- 1.2. **Actions:** Member States are urged to amplify investments in broadband infrastructure and formulate policies to make

internet access and digital technologies universally affordable and accessible. Partnerships and collaboration among all stakeholders are vital for the advancement of digital skills and literacy, with multilateral organizations and private industry providing indispensable technical and financial support for capacity-building endeavours.

2. Digital Cooperation to Accelerate Progress on the SDGs

- 2.1. **Objective:** To harness digital technologies as a powerful tool to accelerate the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- 2.2. **Actions:** Integrating digital solutions in all sectors, especially in key sectors such as health, education, energy, government, and economic development is crucial. Stakeholders are encouraged to cultivate partnerships that promote digital innovations for SDG-related projects, supported by knowledge exchange facilitated by multilateral organizations.

3. Upholding Human Rights

- 3.1. **Objective:** To ensure digital technologies respect and amplify human rights.
- 3.2. **Actions:** Enactment and enforcement of legislation that protects online freedoms and privacy are critical. All entities should advocate for ethical digital practices, with oversight from multilateral organizations to monitor and report digital rights violations.

4. An Inclusive, Open, Safe, Secure, and Shared Internet

- 4.1. **Objective:** To champion an internet environment that is universally accessible, respects privacy, and is safeguarded against threats.
- 4.2. **Actions:** Implementing inclusive policies to ensure internet access for vulnerable groups (persons with disabilities, migrants, people with low income, and people from remote areas), development of secure digital infrastructures, and international cooperation in cybersecurity are key.

5. Digital Trust and Security

- 5.1. **Objective:** To enhance trust and confidence within digital ecosystems through robust security measures.
- 5.2. **Actions:** Comprehensive cybersecurity laws should be adopted and enforced by Member States, with multilateral organizations playing a pivotal role in developing and implementing global security standards and confidence building measures, and in sharing threat intelligence and best practices.

6. Data Protection and Empowerment

- 6.1. **Objective:** To protect personal data and empower individuals with control over their information.
- 6.2. **Actions:** The enactment of strong data protection laws and data governance frameworks by Member States is essential. All stakeholders must embrace cybersecurity, data protection and security / privacy by design principles, while multilateral organizations promote

international data protection and cybersecurity standards, and private industry develops and implements solutions and services.

7. Effective and Agile Governance of Emerging Technologies

- 7.1. **Objective:** To ensure the ethical development and deployment of AI, robotics, Quantum Computing, 5G, and other emerging technologies.
- 7.2. **Actions:** Member States must establish regulatory frameworks that encourage and foster innovation, while safeguarding the public interest. All stakeholders engage in responsible research and development, with multilateral organizations supporting governance capacity-building.

8. Global Digital Commons

- 8.1. **Objective:** To advocate for the development and utilization of open-source technologies and digital public goods.
- 8.2. **Actions:** Member States should back the creation and dissemination of digital public goods. Contributions from all stakeholders towards the development of open standards and platforms are crucial, with multilateral organizations facilitating international collaboration.

This comprehensive synergy with the UN Global Digital Compact sets a forward-looking agenda for Africa's digital transformation and sends a strong call for global multistakeholder partnerships.

It underscores our commitment to leveraging digital technologies for the betterment of our societies, ensuring that the African continent is not just a participant but a leader in the global digital economy. Through this alignment, we reaffirm our dedication to creating a digital environment that is secure, inclusive, and conducive to sustainable development, thus ensuring that Africa's voice is heard, and its specific needs are addressed on the global digital stage.

V. Implementation, Follow-up, and Review

Implementation Strategy

1. **National and Regional Frameworks:** Member States are encouraged to develop and adopt comprehensive national and regional strategies that embody the principles and objectives outlined in this Common Position. These frameworks should rely on input from all stakeholders and include specific action plans, timelines, and measurable targets to ensure effective implementation.
2. **Resource Mobilization and Allocation:** Adequate resources, both financial and technical, must be allocated for the successful implementation of cybersecurity strategies. This requires an open, transparent, inclusive multistakeholder efforts, that involves not only domestic investment, but also the leveraging of international partnerships and support mechanisms.
3. **Capacity Building: Strengthening** the capacities of governmental institutions, private sector entities, academic and research institutions, and civil society is crucial. Initiatives should focus on enhancing technical capabilities, legal

and regulatory frameworks, and public awareness regarding cybersecurity and ICT use.

4. **Public-Private Partnerships:** Encouraging collaboration between governments, the private sector, academia, and civil society to foster innovation, share best practices, and mobilize resources for cybersecurity initiatives.

Follow-up Mechanisms

1. **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Establish a robust monitoring and evaluation framework to assess progress, identify challenges, and adjust strategies as necessary. This framework should include specific indicators and benchmarks for evaluating the implementation of cybersecurity measures.
2. **Regular Reporting:** Member States should commit to regular reporting on their progress in implementing the agreed-upon principles and objectives. This could be facilitated through the creation of a centralized digital platform for information exchange and best practices sharing.
3. **Continuous Engagement:** Ongoing dialogue and cooperation among African Union Member States, regional organizations, and international partners are essential. Regular meetings, workshops, and conferences should be held to review progress, share experiences, and refine strategies.

Review and Adaptive Management

1. **Periodic Reviews:** Convene periodic review meetings at both regional and continental levels to assess the effectiveness of implementation efforts,

share best practices, and discuss emerging challenges.

2. **Adaptive Management:** Based on the outcomes of the periodic reviews, strategies and action plans should be adaptable to address new and emerging threats in the cybersecurity landscape effectively.
3. **Policy and Regulatory Updates:** Continuous assessment and updating of policies, regulations, and legislation to reflect the dynamic nature of cyberspace and the evolving threat landscape.

By adhering to these guidelines, African Union Member States reaffirm their commitment to fostering a secure, resilient, and peaceful cyberspace that contributes to the prosperity and well-being of their citizens.

VI. Multi-Stakeholder Implementation

In the spirit of collaborative progress and the African proverb that underscores the interconnectedness of our communities, “If you want to go fast, go alone; if you want to go far, go together,” the African Common Position on the United Nations Global Digital Compact embraces a multi-stakeholder approach for its implementation. Recognizing the complex and interdependent nature of the digital ecosystem, the successful realization of the Compact’s goals necessitates active participation and contributions from all sectors of society.

Strategic Framework for Multi-Stakeholder Engagement

1. **Inclusive Governance Structure:** Establish an inclusive governance framework that incorporates

representatives from government, private sector, civil society, academia, and international organizations. This structure will ensure that diverse perspectives are considered in decision-making processes, fostering a holistic approach to digital transformation.

2. **Clear Definition of Roles and Responsibilities:** Articulate the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders involved in the Compact’s implementation. This clarity will enhance coordination, prevent overlaps, and ensure that each stakeholder’s contributions are directed towards achieving the Compact’s overarching objectives.
3. **Partnership Development:** Promote the development of strategic partnerships across different sectors to leverage collective strengths, share resources, and innovate solutions to digital challenges. These partnerships will be crucial in addressing infrastructural gaps, enhancing digital literacy, and ensuring the inclusivity of digital services.

Implementation Mechanisms

1. **Action Plan Coordination:** Implement coordinated action plans that align national strategies with the Compact’s goals, facilitated by the governance structure. These plans will detail specific initiatives, timelines, and expected outcomes, providing a roadmap for collective action.
2. **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Develop a robust monitoring and evaluation system to track progress, measure impact, and identify areas for improvement. This system will enable timely adjustments to strategies, ensuring the Compact remains

responsive to emerging challenges and opportunities.

3. **Resource Mobilization:** Identify and mobilize necessary resources for the Compact's implementation. This includes financial investments, technical expertise, and human capital, sourced from both domestic and international partners.

Capacity Building and Knowledge Sharing

1. **Digital Skills and Literacy:** Enhance digital skills and literacy across all segments of the population, focusing on vulnerable and underserved communities. This effort will ensure that the benefits of digital transformation are accessible to everyone, empowering individuals to participate fully in the digital economy.
2. **Support for Innovation and Entrepreneurship:** Foster an environment that supports digital innovation and entrepreneurship. By providing access to resources, mentorship, and networking opportunities, the Compact aims to stimulate the growth of digital startups and SMEs, driving economic diversification and job creation.
3. **Exchange of Best Practices:** Facilitate the exchange of knowledge and best practices among stakeholders. This exchange will enhance learning, foster innovation, and build capacity across the continent, contributing to the sustainable development of the digital ecosystem.

The multi-stakeholder implementation of the United Nations Global Digital Compact and African Digital Compact are foundational

to achieving a resilient, inclusive, and sustainable digital future for Africa. Through collaborative efforts, shared responsibilities, and collective action, we can harness the transformative power of digital technologies to improve the lives of all Africans, ensuring that the continent plays a pivotal role in shaping the global digital landscape.

VI I. Tangible Outcomes and Measurable Commitments:

There are several measurable commitments and objectives that are highlighted in AU related policy documents, that are in-line with the ten Pillars of the proposed ADC:

1. Strengthening of the current internet/digital governance processes in terms of enforceable and actionable outcomes and increased participation of underserved regions and underpenetrated stakeholder groups. (AU Declaration on IG and the Development of Africa's Digital Economy) >> All ADC Pillars, especially Pillars 1 and 2.
2. URGE the international community to transform the non-global institutions into more inclusive global institutions that represent all citizens of the world, considering the concerns and needs of Africa and other developing countries, while advocating for their continued role as the core of the global Internet governance ecosystem; (AU Declaration on IG and the Development of Africa's Digital Economy) >> ADC Pillar 10.
3. Build a secured Digital Single Market in Africa by 2030 where free movement of persons, services and capital is ensured, and individuals and businesses can

seamlessly access and engage in online activities in line with Africa's Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) (DTS 2020-2030) >> ADC Pillars 4 and 5.

4. By 2030 all our people should be digitally empowered and able to access safely and securely to at least (6 mb/s) all the time where ever they live in the continent at an affordable price of no more than (1cts usd per mb) through a smart device manufactured in the continent at the price of no more than (100 usd) to benefit from all basic e-services and content of which at least 30% is developed and hosted in Africa; (DTS 2020-2030). >> ADC Pillars 1, 2, 3 and 5.
5. 99.9% of people in Africa to have a digital legal identity as part of a civil registration process by 2030 (DTS 2020-2030). >> ADC Pillars 5 and 6.
6. Developing and maintaining platforms and databases to pool resources and child online protection information exchange including hotlines for reporting and victim support. (The Child Online Safety and Empowerment Policy). >> ADC Pillar 6.
7. Increase the contribution of digital services to 7% of GDP; Increase the share of high technology products in manufactured export to 20%; Provide access to Internet connectivity of at least 6 Mb per second to 80% of the population; At least 40% of secondary and tertiary education graduates are in STEM-related disciplines; At least 80% of children complete primary education with minimum required proficiency levels in reading, writing, mathematics,

and digital skills. (The 2nd ten-year (2024 – 2033) implementation plan of AU Agenda 2063). >> All ADC Pillars.

VIII. Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

As this discourse on the African Digital Compact concludes, it illuminates the path towards an encompassing digital transformation within Africa. Drawing upon the profound adage, "We aspire to leave our children with roots to ground them and wings to carry them forward," these Compacts delineates a course to leverage digital innovation for the sustainable development, economic enhancement, and societal advancement globally, and especially, Africa. Addressing the digital divide and capitalizing on the digital era's opportunities, these Compacts stand as a commitment to integrating digital technologies into the fabric of global and African prosperity, unity, and international collaboration.

Recommendations

To actualize the vision set forth by the Draft United Nations Global Digital Compact and African Union Digital Compact, the following recommendations are put forth:

1. **Enhance Digital Infrastructure:** Focus on the critical expansion and modernization of digital infrastructure to guarantee comprehensive and affordable access to digital technologies, particularly emphasizing rural and underserved regions.
2. **Promote Digital Literacy and Skills:** Champion initiatives across the continent to bolster digital literacy and

foster essential digital competencies, preparing the African populace for active participation in a digital economy.

3. **Foster Digital Innovation:** Stimulate the ecosystem for digital entrepreneurship and innovation across Africa, encouraging economic diversity and generating employment opportunities within the digital domain.

4. **Strengthen Cybersecurity:** Advocate for the development and enforcement of stringent cybersecurity measures and

data protection laws, ensuring a secure digital environment that garners user trust and safeguards personal data.

5. **Harmonize Digital Policies and Regulations:** Facilitate the alignment of digital policies, regulations, and standards across African nations to support efficient cross-border digital engagements and foster regional integration.

6. **Bolster Multilateral and Global Partnerships:** Enhance Africa's role



and representation in global digital governance, advocating for collaborative efforts and partnerships that reflect the continent's digital aspirations and challenges.

Moving Forward

Navigating the future, Africa stands at the cusp of boundless opportunities accompanied by significant challenges. The collective journey towards digital transformation necessitates a concerted effort grounded in unity, innovation, and

inclusivity. The fruition of the United Nations Global Digital Compact and African Union Digital Compact are contingent upon our collective dedication to these principles.

In the spirit of shared progress, let us reaffirm our commitment to these Compact's visions, striving unwaveringly towards a future where digital technology empowers every corner of the world. Embracing the ethos "Together, we go far," we underscore our journey towards an era marked by digital inclusion, prosperity, and meaningful participation on the global stage.



Appendix II: Mapping the Synergies between the AU ADC and other AUC and related Strategies.

The African Digital Compact (ADC) stands as a pivotal document within Africa's digital evolution, representing a unified strategy under the African Union Commission's (AUC) vision to exploit digital technology for socio-economic advancement. This document signifies a concerted effort to align with the African Union's strategic directives, such as Agenda 2063 and the Digital Transformation Strategy for Africa (2020-2030), among others, aiming to leverage digital innovation for the continent's prosperity. It showcases a holistic approach to navigating Africa's digital opportunities and challenges, aiming to enhance connectivity, address the digital divide, bolster cybersecurity, and harness the demographic dividend.

By fostering cross-border digital integration and emphasizing the importance of a coordinated policy framework, infrastructure

development, and skill enhancement, the ADC and related AU strategies endeavour to catalyse a comprehensive digital transformation. This concerted synergy calls upon stakeholders to collaboratively utilize digital technologies for inclusive growth, sustainable development, and bolstering Africa's position on the global stage, marking a unified stride towards realizing the continent's digital aspirations.

Summary of the Draft ADC and various strategic documents or initiatives

The following table encapsulates the synergy between the Draft African Digital Compact and various strategic documents and initiatives, highlighting the collaborative and aligned efforts to drive digital transformation across the African continent:

S#	Strategic Document/Initiative	Synergy with Draft ADC
1	UN-GDC	Shared emphasis on universal connectivity, digital rights, and global digital cooperation.
2	AU Agenda 2063	Alignment on fostering a prosperous, integrated, and technologically empowered Africa.
3	AU Digital Transformation Strategy for Africa (2020-2030)	Mutual goals for digital inclusion, infrastructure development, and digital economy growth.
4	AU Digital Sectorial Strategies (agriculture, education, health)	Complementary approaches to leveraging digital technologies for sector-specific advancements.
5	AU Interoperability Framework for Digital ID	Synergy in enhancing digital identity management and cross-border services.

6	AU Data Policy Framework	Shared focus on harmonizing data governance, enhancing privacy, and promoting data-driven development.
7	AU Strategy on Enabling Policy and Regulatory Environment for Africa's Digital Single Market	Common objectives in creating a harmonized digital market and regulatory landscape across Africa.
8	Smart Africa Manifest	Joint commitment to ICT as a driver for socio-economic development and digital transformation across Africa.
9	PRIDA	Cooperative efforts to harmonize digital policies and regulations and strengthen the digital governance ecosystem.
10	African Space Policy and Strategy	Alignment on utilizing space technology for digital infrastructure improvement and service delivery.
11	African Union Strategy for Gender Equality & Women's Empowerment	Synergy in promoting digital inclusion and empowerment for women and girls in the digital sphere.
12	Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA 16-25)	Common goals to enhance digital literacy and integrate ICT in education for sustainable development.
13	African Union Science, Technology, and Innovation Strategy for Africa 2024 (STISA-2024)	Shared vision for leveraging STI in driving Africa's digital transformation and innovation.
14	African Union (Malabo) Convention on Cyber Security and Personal Data Protection	Unified efforts to strengthen cyber security, protect personal data, and fight cybercrime.
15	Draft AU Convention on Establishing a Credible Legal Framework for Cyber Security in Africa (Lome Convention)	Synergy in establishing robust legal frameworks to enhance cyber security and data protection across Africa.
16	Africa Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA)	Aligning efforts to enhance digital connectivity and harmonize digital policies, thereby facilitating seamless cross-border digital trade and supporting the economic integration goals of the AfCFTA.
17	Unique Opportunities and Challenges Presented by Africa's Digital Landscape	Shared recognition and strategic response to harnessing Africa's digital opportunities and addressing challenges.

Approved AUC Related Documents

Some approved related african union strategic documents and initiatives for ict include:

1	The UN recommendations on the Global Digital Compact.
2	The African Union's Agenda 2063.
3	The Digital Transformation Strategy for Africa (2020-2030).
4	The Digital Sectorial Strategies for agriculture, education, and health.
5	The AU Interoperability Framework for Digital ID.
6	The AU Data Policy Framework
7	The AU Strategy on Enabling Policy and Regulatory Environment for Africa's Digital Single Market.
8	Smart Africa Manifesto.
9	PRIDA (Policy and Regulation Initiative for Digital Africa).
10	African Space Policy and Strategy.
11	African Union Strategy for Gender Equality & Women's Empowerment.
12	Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA 16-25).
13	African Union Science, Technology, and Innovation Strategy for Africa 2024 (STISA-2024).
14	The African Union (Malabo) Convention on Cyber Security and Personal Data Protection.
15	Common African Position on the Application of International Law to the Use of Information and Communication Technologies in Cyberspace
16	AU Convention on Establishing a Credible Legal Framework for Cyber Security in Africa (Lome Convention).
17	The Africa Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA).
18	The unique opportunities and challenges presented by Africa's digital landscape, all underpinned by guiding principles tailored to the African context.

Detailed Mapping of the Draft ADC and various strategic documents or initiatives

The following tables detail the “synergy” towards an enhanced collective impact from working together, in terms of the directional consistency of alignment and the deeper harmony of congruence between the AU-ADC and other AUC and related Strategies and related Initiatives.

Draft ADC and Draft and UN-GDC

S#	UN Recommendations on the GDC	Synergy with Draft ADC	Explanation
1	Ensure universal connectivity to achieve universal, meaningful connectivity that includes access to broadband internet for all people by 2030.	The Compact emphasizes ensuring affordable access to digital technologies and expanding digital infrastructure across Africa, aiming for universal connectivity.	Direct alignment with the goal of universal connectivity, focusing on infrastructure expansion and affordability to ensure broadband access for all Africans.
2	Promote digital public goods to foster equitable access to digital public services and open-source digital tools that support societal goals and sustainable development.	Advocates for the development and sharing of digital public goods and services to improve public service delivery and foster innovation.	Reflects the emphasis on leveraging digital technologies to provide accessible and equitable public services, aligning with the concept of digital public goods.
3	Ensure digital inclusion and equity to bridge digital divides and ensure that all people can benefit from the digital age, with special attention to gender equity, people with disabilities, and other vulnerable groups.	Focuses on bridging digital divides by making digital technologies accessible and affordable, enhancing digital literacy and skills for all, including vulnerable communities.	Aligns with the commitment to digital inclusion and equity, emphasizing efforts to provide equitable access to digital technologies and literacy across diverse populations.
4	Guarantee meaningful connectivity and digital capacity building to enhance the ability of individuals and communities to use digital technologies effectively.	Highlights the enhancement of digital skills and literacy across the continent, supporting initiatives aimed at preparing Africans for the digital economy.	Directly supports the objective of meaningful connectivity through initiatives focused on digital literacy and skills development, aiming to empower individuals and communities.
5	Protect digital rights and ensure safety and security online to safeguard individuals' rights and freedoms in the digital space, emphasizing privacy, data protection, and freedom of expression.	Emphasizes enhancing cybersecurity and data protection, advocating for robust measures to protect digital ecosystems and personal data.	Aligns with the protection of digital rights and the emphasis on creating a secure and trustworthy digital environment, focusing on cybersecurity and data protection.

6	Foster digital cooperation and governance to promote multi-stakeholder approaches to digital policymaking, ensuring that digital technologies serve the common good.	Stresses strengthening global digital cooperation and governance, ensuring Africa's active participation and representation in global digital policy dialogues.	Supports the call for digital cooperation and inclusive governance, advocating for collaborative and multi-stakeholder approaches to digital policymaking.
7	Advance digital transformation for sustainable development to leverage digital technologies as enablers for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).	The Compact leverages digital technologies for sustainable development, economic growth, and societal well-being throughout Africa, aligning with Agenda 2063 and the SDGs.	Emphasizes the strategic use of digital technologies to achieve sustainable development, aligning with the broader goal of utilizing digital transformation to support the SDGs.

Draft ADC and AU Agenda 63

S#	Agenda 2063 Aspirations	Synergy with Draft ADC	Explanation
1	Aspiration 1: A prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development	The Compact emphasizes leveraging digital technologies to foster sustainable development and economic growth throughout Africa.	By promoting digital transformation, the Compact aligns with Agenda 2063's vision for prosperity through inclusive growth and sustainability
2	Aspiration 2: An integrated continent, politically united and based on the ideals of Pan-Africanism	Stresses the importance of creating a single digital market and harmonizing digital and data policies to facilitate cross-border collaboration.	The Compact's focus on digital integration supports the vision of a united Africa, enhancing regional connectivity and economic integration
3	Aspiration 3: An Africa of good governance, democracy, respect for human rights, justice, and the rule of law	Emphasizes enhancing cybersecurity and data protection, advocating for robust measures to protect digital ecosystems and personal data	By advocating for digital rights and secure online environments, the Compact aligns with the aspiration for good governance and respect for human rights.
4	Aspiration 4: A peaceful and secure Africa	Calls for robust cybersecurity measures to protect digital ecosystems and personal data, contributing to a secure digital environment	The focus on cybersecurity aligns with the aspiration for a peaceful and secure continent, extending security concerns to the digital realm.
5	Aspiration 5: An Africa with a strong cultural identity, common heritage, values, and ethics	The Compact's overarching goals suggest support for digital platforms that promote Africa's cultural heritage and values.	The promotion of digital inclusivity and public services likely includes efforts to preserve and celebrate Africa's cultural identity through digital means

6	Aspiration 6: An Africa whose development is people-driven, relying on the potential of African people, especially its women and youth	Focuses on the enhancement of digital skills and literacy across the continent, preparing Africans for the digital economy.	By emphasizing digital literacy and skills development, the Compact supports the aspiration for people-driven development, empowering women, and youth
7	Aspiration 7: Africa as a strong, united, resilient, and influential global player and partner	Stresses strengthening global digital cooperation and governance, ensuring Africa's active participation in international digital policy dialogues	The Compact's emphasis on global digital cooperation enhances Africa's role as a strong and influential partner in the digital age, aligning with the aspiration for a globally competitive Africa.

Draft ADC and AU Digital Transformation Strategy for Africa (2020-2030)

S#	DTS (2020-2030) Goals	Synergy with Draft ADC	Explanation
1	To ensure that every African has access to digital services	The Compact emphasizes ensuring affordable access to digital technologies and expanding digital infrastructure across Africa.	This directly supports the goal of universal access to digital services by focusing on infrastructure expansion and affordability.
2	To digitize all sectors, driving economic growth and development	Highlights the development of digital public goods and services and the promotion of digital literacy, aiming to integrate ICT into sectors such as education, health, and agriculture.	By leveraging digital technologies across various sectors, the Compact aligns with the strategy's aim for comprehensive digitization to fuel economic growth.
3	To establish a single digital market in Africa	Stresses the importance of creating a single digital market and harmonizing digital and data policies to facilitate cross-border collaboration.	The focus on a unified digital market supports the strategy's vision of seamless digital trade and interoperability across African countries.
4	To improve governance through digitization	Advocates for the harmonization of digital policies and regulations to create a conducive environment for digital governance.	Enhancing digital governance aligns with the strategy's objective of leveraging ICT for more efficient and transparent government processes.
5	To foster innovation and entrepreneurship within the digital economy	Encourages digital entrepreneurship and innovation ecosystems, fostering economic diversification and job creation in the digital domain.	Promoting innovation and entrepreneurship directly supports the strategy's goal to stimulate economic activity and competitiveness in the digital sector.

6	To ensure the inclusion and empowerment of all segments of society	Focuses on bridging digital divides by making digital technologies accessible and affordable, enhancing digital literacy and skills for all.	Addressing digital inclusion and empowering diverse populations, including vulnerable communities, aligns with the strategy's emphasis on inclusivity.
7	To enhance cybersecurity and protect personal data	Emphasizes enhancing cybersecurity and data protection, advocating for robust measures to protect digital ecosystems and personal data.	By prioritizing cybersecurity and data protection, the Compact meets the strategy's call for securing digital environments and safeguarding user privacy.

Draft ADC and AU Digital Sectorial Strategies for agriculture, education, and health

S#	Sectorial strategy objectives	Synergy with draft adc	Explanation
AGRICULTURE			
1	Leverage digital technologies to enhance agricultural productivity and sustainability	The Compact promotes the use of digital technologies to improve service delivery in agriculture, aiming to increase productivity and sustainability.	By focusing on digital innovation in agriculture, the Compact aligns with sectorial strategies to enhance productivity and sustainable practices through digital tools.
EDUCATION			
1	Integrate digital technologies to improve access to and the quality of education	Highlights the development of digital public goods and services, including digital education platforms and resources, to enhance access and quality of education.	The emphasis on leveraging digital technologies in education supports sectorial objectives to improve educational access and quality through digital means.
2	Promote digital literacy and skills among students and educators	Focuses on the enhancement of digital skills and literacy across the continent, indirectly supporting the educational sector's need for digital competence.	By advocating for widespread digital literacy and skills, the Compact addresses educational strategies aiming to equip both students and educators with digital competencies.
HEALTH			

1	Use digital technologies to improve healthcare delivery and patient outcomes	Encourages the leveraging of digital technologies for better healthcare delivery, including the development of digital health services and platforms.	Aligning with health sector strategies, the Compact's support for digital innovation in healthcare aims to enhance delivery and outcomes through digital solutions.
2	Promote the adoption of digital health records and telemedicine	The emphasis on digital infrastructure and public services likely supports the health sector's move towards digital health records and telemedicine.	The Compact's focus on digital infrastructure indirectly facilitates the adoption of telemedicine and digital health records, contributing to the sector's objectives.

Draft ADC and AU Interoperability Framework for Digital ID

S#	AU Interoperability Framework for Digital ID Objectives	Synergy with Draft ADC	Explanation
1	Establish a harmonized legal and regulatory framework for Digital ID across Africa	The Compact emphasizes the importance of harmonizing digital policies and regulations, indirectly supporting the creation of a conducive environment for Digital ID interoperability.	By advocating for harmonized digital policies, the Compact aligns with the objective to create a uniform legal and regulatory framework for Digital ID, facilitating cross-border services and identity verification.
2	Promote the use of Digital ID as a foundation for digital economies and societies	The Compact's overarching goals of digital transformation and infrastructure development create a supportive backdrop for the adoption and use of Digital ID systems.	The focus on digital infrastructure and services within the Compact indirectly promotes the foundational role of Digital ID in enabling digital economies and societies.
3	Ensure interoperability of Digital ID systems within and across African countries	Stresses the importance of creating a single digital market and enhancing cross-border digital collaboration, which would benefit from and contribute to the interoperability of Digital ID systems.	The push for a unified digital market and improved digital collaboration underlines the necessity of interoperable Digital ID systems, aligning with the framework's goals for seamless cross-border identification.
4	Enhance security, privacy, and trust in digital services through effective Digital ID management	Emphasizes enhancing cybersecurity and data protection, indirectly supporting the framework's aim to ensure secure, private, and trustworthy Digital ID management.	By focusing on cybersecurity and data protection, the Compact indirectly supports the creation of secure and trusted environments for Digital ID, essential for user confidence and protection.

5	Facilitate inclusive access to services and rights through Digital ID	Focuses on ensuring affordable access to digital technologies and enhancing digital literacy, indirectly facilitating the broader adoption and use of Digital ID to access services and rights.	The emphasis on digital inclusivity and literacy within the Compact indirectly supports the framework's objective of using Digital ID to enable equitable access to digital services and rights for all Africans.
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Draft ADC and AU Data Policy Framework

S#	AU Data Policy Framework Objectives	Synergy with Draft ADC	Explanation
1	Develop a harmonized data governance and policy landscape across Africa	The Compact emphasizes the importance of harmonizing digital policies and regulations, which indirectly supports the creation of a unified data governance framework.	By advocating for harmonized digital and data policies, the Compact aligns with the framework's goal to establish coherent data governance across the continent.
2	Enhance data protection and privacy for individuals	Emphasizes enhancing cybersecurity and data protection, advocating for robust measures to protect personal data and ensure privacy.	Directly aligns with the framework's objectives to safeguard personal information and enhance privacy in the digital space.
3	Foster the free flow of data across borders while ensuring data security	Stresses the importance of creating a single digital market and enhancing cross-border digital collaboration, which requires and contributes to the secure free flow of data.	The Compact's push for a unified digital market and improved digital collaboration underpins the framework's goal for secure data flow across borders.
4	Promote data accessibility and the use of open data for innovation and development	While not explicitly mentioned, the Compact's overarching goals of digital transformation suggest support for open data initiatives that drive innovation and development.	The focus on digital innovation and public services within the Compact indirectly supports the objective of utilizing open data for societal and economic advancement.
5	Build capacity for data management and analytics to support decision-making	Focuses on enhancing digital skills and literacy, which could indirectly include capacities related to data management and analytics.	By emphasizing digital literacy and skills development, the Compact indirectly supports the framework's aim to enhance data analytics capabilities for informed decision-making.

6	Ensure that data-driven technologies are leveraged for sustainable development and societal well-being	The Compact leverages digital technologies for sustainable development, economic growth, and societal well-being, aligning with the use of data for these purposes.	Reflects a shared commitment to leveraging data and digital technologies to achieve sustainable development goals and improve societal outcomes.
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Draft ADC and AU Strategy on Enabling Policy and Regulatory Environment for Africa's Digital Single Market:

S#	AU Strategy Objectives	Synergy with Draft ADC	Explanation
1	Create a harmonized regulatory framework for the digital market across Africa	The Compact emphasizes the importance of harmonizing digital policies and regulations to facilitate cross-border collaboration and create Africa's Digital Single Market.	Directly aligns with the strategy's goal to establish a consistent regulatory environment across the continent, fostering a seamless digital marketplace.
2	Ensure the free movement of data across borders while protecting personal data	Advocates for the enhancement of cybersecurity and data protection, indirectly supporting the secure free movement of data as part of a single digital market.	While focusing on security and privacy, the Compact supports the strategy's aim for data mobility, essential for a digital single market, by ensuring data protection measures.
3	Promote digital inclusivity and access to digital services for all Africans	Focuses on ensuring affordable access to digital technologies and enhancing digital literacy and skills for all, directly supporting digital inclusivity.	The emphasis on affordability and literacy aligns with the strategy's objectives to ensure wide access to digital services, crucial for an inclusive digital single market.
4	Foster innovation and competition in the digital economy	Encourages digital entrepreneurship and innovation ecosystems, fostering economic diversification and job creation in the digital domain.	By promoting innovation and entrepreneurship, the Compact aligns with the strategy's goals to stimulate a dynamic digital economy and encourage competition.
5	Strengthen cybersecurity and enhance trust in digital services	Emphasizes enhancing cybersecurity measures and data protection to create a secure and trusted digital environment.	The Compact's focus on cybersecurity directly supports the strategy's objective to build trust in digital services, which is essential for a functional digital single market.

6	Facilitate digital transformation across various sectors	Highlights the development of digital public goods and services, aiming to integrate ICT into sectors such as education, health, and agriculture.	The sectoral approach to digital transformation in the Compact mirrors the strategy's aim to leverage digital technologies for broader socio-economic development.
7	Develop skills and enhance human capacity to support the digital economy	Focuses on the enhancement of digital skills and literacy across the continent, indirectly supporting human capacity development for the digital economy.	The emphasis on digital literacy and skills development aligns with the strategy's focus on human capital as a critical factor for the success of the digital single market.

Draft ADC and Smart Africa Manifest:

S#	Smart Africa Manifesto Objectives	Synergy with Draft ADC	Explanation
1	Put ICT at the centre of national socio-economic development agendas	The Compact is aligned with this objective by advocating for leveraging digital technologies to foster sustainable development and economic growth throughout Africa.	It highlights the pivotal role of ICT in accelerating socio-economic development, mirroring the manifesto's vision.
2	Promote affordable access to digital services for all and the development of local content	Focuses on ensuring affordable access to digital technologies and enhancing digital literacy, directly addressing the goal of promoting inclusive digital access and local content development.	This reflects a shared commitment to reducing digital divides and promoting content that reflects African cultures and languages.
3	Improve connectivity infrastructure across the continent	Advocates for the expansion of digital infrastructure to cover underserved areas, directly aligning with the manifesto's emphasis on improving connectivity.	The Compact and the manifesto both recognize the fundamental role of robust connectivity infrastructure in achieving digital transformation.

4	Foster private sector engagement and entrepreneurship in the ICT sector	Encourages digital entrepreneurship and innovation ecosystems, fostering economic diversification and job creation in the digital domain.	Both documents view the private sector and entrepreneurship as crucial drivers of innovation and economic growth in the ICT sector.
5	Ensure the adoption of ICTs in all aspects of society and economy	Highlights the development of digital public goods and services and the promotion of digital literacy, aiming to integrate ICT into education, health, agriculture, and more.	The Compact embodies the manifesto's call for comprehensive ICT adoption, ensuring that digital technologies permeate various societal and economic sectors.
6	Establish a transparent and efficient management of spectrum resources	The overarching goals suggest a conducive environment for efficient spectrum management as part of broader digital infrastructure development efforts.	Efficient spectrum management is implicit in the goal of enhancing connectivity and access, crucial for a vibrant digital ecosystem.
7	Develop a sustainable, trustworthy, and secure digital environment	Emphasizes enhancing cybersecurity and data protection, addressing the manifesto's focus on creating a secure and reliable digital environment.	Both documents prioritize the security and trustworthiness of digital infrastructures and services, recognizing their importance for user confidence and safety.
8	Promote digital innovation and provide training to citizens to improve digital literacy	Focuses on the enhancement of digital skills and literacy, supporting initiatives aimed at preparing Africans for the digital economy.	Directly aligns with the manifesto's goal to empower citizens with the necessary digital competencies, ensuring broad participation in the digital world.

Draft ADC and PRIDA:

S#	African Space Policy and Strategy Objectives	Synergy with Draft ADC	Explanation
1	Harmonize digital policies and regulations across Africa	The Compact emphasizes the importance of harmonizing digital and data policies to facilitate cross-border collaboration and the creation of Africa's Digital Single Market.	This reflects PRIDA's aim to create a cohesive digital policy landscape across the continent, making it easier to manage digital services and goods across national borders.
2	Strengthen the digital ecosystem by promoting inclusive access to digital services	Focuses on ensuring affordable access to digital technologies and enhancing digital literacy and skills, directly addressing the goal of promoting inclusive digital access.	By advocating for inclusive access and enhancing digital literacy, the Compact aligns with PRIDA's objectives to bolster the digital ecosystem across Africa.
3	Enhance the capacity of AU Member States in digital policy and regulation	Capacity building in policy and regulation, the overarching goals suggest a conducive environment for such initiatives.	Supporting member states in understanding and implementing digital policies and regulations is inherent in the Compact's broader goals, resonating with PRIDA's focus.
4	Support the development of digital markets and encourage digital innovation and entrepreneurship	Encourages digital entrepreneurship and innovation ecosystems, fostering economic diversification and job creation in the digital domain.	Aligning perfectly with PRIDA, the Compact's support for digital markets, innovation, and entrepreneurship highlights the initiative's role in driving Africa's digital transformation.
5	Facilitate the sharing of best practices and knowledge among AU Member States	Although not specifically mentioned, the principles of collaboration and partnership in the Compact imply a shared approach to knowledge and best practice dissemination.	The spirit of collaboration and knowledge sharing underlined in the Compact mirrors PRIDA's objectives to leverage collective expertise and experiences for digital growth.

Draft ADC and African Space Policy and Strategy:

S#	African Space Policy and Strategy Objectives	Synergy with Draft ADC	Explanation
1	Promote the use of space technologies for Africa's socio-economic development	The Compact's emphasis on leveraging digital technologies for sustainable development suggests an indirect alignment with utilizing space technologies for similar ends.	Space technologies, essential for digital infrastructure like satellite communication and earth observation, underpin many digital services that contribute to socio-economic development.
2	Strengthen Africa's capacity in space science and technology	The Compact's focus on enhancing digital skills and literacy across the continent can indirectly contribute to building capacity in space science and technology.	By advocating for broad digital education and literacy, the Compact potentially supports a skilled workforce that could contribute to the space sector as well.
3	Encourage African countries to collaborate on space projects	Although specific to space collaboration is not detailed, the Compact's call for cross-border collaboration in the digital realm implies a supportive stance towards collaborative space projects.	Collaboration in digital transformation could extend to space projects, leveraging shared resources, knowledge, and infrastructure.
4	Ensure access to satellite communication services for all African countries	The promotion of digital infrastructure development in the Compact aligns with ensuring access to satellite communication, which is crucial for remote and underserved areas.	Satellite communication is a key component of digital infrastructure, especially for achieving universal connectivity across the continent.
5	Leverage space data for environmental monitoring and management	The Compact's strategic imperatives around leveraging digital technologies for green, resilient, and inclusive development could encompass the use of space data for environmental purposes.	Space data plays a critical role in environmental monitoring and management, aligning with the Compact's focus on sustainable development.

Draft ADC and African Union Strategy for Gender Equality & Women's Empowerment:

S#	AU Strategy for GEWE Objectives	Synergy with Draft ADC	Explanation
1	Promote women and girls' access to ICT and STEM education	The Compact focuses on enhancing digital skills and literacy across the continent indirectly supports this objective by advocating for inclusive access to digital education and skills development.	The emphasis on digital literacy and skills development within the Compact likely encompasses efforts to bridge the gender gap in ICT and STEM fields, aligning with the strategy's goals.
2	Ensure the participation of women in the digital economy and ICT-related careers	The encouragement of digital entrepreneurship and innovation ecosystems in the Compact potentially supports the inclusion of women, though specific initiatives targeting women's participation are not detailed.	The Compact's focus on fostering an inclusive digital economy could indirectly facilitate greater participation of women in ICT-related careers and entrepreneurship, in line with the strategy's aims.
3	Address and eliminate gender-based digital divides	The Compact's aim to bridge digital divides by making digital technologies accessible and affordable for all implicitly includes efforts to eliminate gender-based digital divides, though it does not specify gender-focused measures.	By aiming to bridge digital divides, the Compact aligns with the strategy's objective to address gender-based disparities in digital access, usage, and skills.
4	Enhance the safety and security of women and girls online	The emphasis on enhancing cybersecurity and data protection within the Compact indirectly contributes to creating a safer and more secure online environment for women and girls, although specific measures are not mentioned.	The focus on a secure digital environment could support efforts to protect women and girls from online harassment and violence, echoing the strategy's concerns for online safety.

5	Leverage digital technologies to promote gender equality	The Compact's overarching goals of leveraging digital technologies for sustainable development and societal well-being likely include the potential to advance gender equality, though specific initiatives are not highlighted.	The strategic use of digital technologies for development and inclusion within the Compact provides a framework that could be leveraged to advance gender equality, resonating with the strategy's objectives.
6	Support women's leadership in the digital sector	Although not specifically addressed, the Compact's support for innovation and entrepreneurship could encompass initiatives to promote women's leadership within the digital sector, aligning with the strategy's goals.	Fostering an inclusive digital economy and entrepreneurship ecosystem potentially provides opportunities for women's leadership and participation in decision-making roles in the digital sector.

Draft ADC and Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA 16-25):

S#	CESA 16-25 Objectives	Synergy with Draft ADC	Explanation
1	Strengthen education and training systems to meet the knowledge, competencies, skills, innovation, and creativity required to nurture African core values and promote sustainable development.	The Compact emphasizes enhancing digital skills and literacy across the continent, supporting initiatives aimed at preparing Africans for the digital economy.	The focus on digital literacy and skills development within the Compact aligns with CESA's objective to enhance education systems, ensuring they deliver the necessary competencies for sustainable development.
2	Promote science, technology, research, and innovation to build knowledge, capabilities, and skills for Africa's future.	Encourages digital entrepreneurship and innovation ecosystems, fostering economic diversification and job creation in the digital domain.	By advocating for innovation and entrepreneurship within the digital sector, the Compact mirrors CESA's emphasis on promoting science, technology, and innovation in education.

3	Build and upgrade education facilities to provide safe, non-violent, inclusive, and effective learning environments for all.	While not explicitly mentioned, the Compact's overarching goals suggest a conducive environment for leveraging digital technologies to enhance education facilities and environments.	The promotion of digital infrastructure and public services likely supports efforts to improve education facilities through ICT, indirectly aligning with CESA's goals.
4	Expand and improve comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children.	The emphasis on digital literacy and skills development could indirectly support early childhood education initiatives, though specific mentions are not made.	Initiatives aimed at enhancing digital literacy from an early age align with the goal of improving early childhood education, even if not directly mentioned within the Compact.
5	Enhance teacher training and professional development for quality education outcomes.	The focus on digital skills enhancement implicitly includes teacher training and professional development in ICT competencies.	By promoting digital literacy and skills, the Compact indirectly supports the professional development of educators to improve education quality, resonating with CESA's objectives.
6	Harness the capacity of ICT to improve access, quality, and relevance of education and training systems.	Highlights the development of digital public goods and services, including digital education platforms and resources, to enhance access and quality of education.	Directly aligns with CESA's goal to leverage ICT for improving education systems, showcasing a shared vision for integrating digital technologies into education.
7	Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.	Focuses on ensuring affordable access to digital technologies and enhancing digital literacy, aiming to promote inclusive and equitable education opportunities.	The Compact's initiatives to bridge digital divides and promote digital literacy align with CESA's emphasis on inclusivity and equity in education, supporting lifelong learning through digital means.

Draft ADC and African Union Science, Technology, and Innovation Strategy for Africa 2024 (STISA-2024)

S#	STISA-2024 Objectives	Synergy with Draft ADC	Explanation
1	Accelerate Africa's transition to an innovation-led, knowledge-based economy	The Compact emphasizes leveraging digital technologies for sustainable development and economic growth, fostering an environment conducive to innovation and knowledge creation.	By advocating for the strategic use of digital technologies and fostering innovation ecosystems, the Compact aligns with STISA-2024's vision of a knowledge-based economy.
2	Promote science, technology, and innovation (STI) to achieve continental development goals	Encourages digital entrepreneurship and innovation ecosystems, recognizing the role of STI in addressing Africa's development challenges.	The focus on digital innovation and entrepreneurship within the Compact directly supports STISA-2024's objective of utilizing STI for development.
3	Strengthen Africa's science and technology capacities	Focuses on the enhancement of digital skills and literacy across the continent, indirectly contributing to building STI capacities.	By emphasizing digital literacy and skills development, the Compact indirectly supports the strengthening of science and technology capacities in line with STISA-2024.
4	Foster social and economic development by harnessing the potential of STI across all sectors	Highlights the development of digital public goods and services, aiming to integrate ICT into sectors such as education, health, and agriculture.	The Compact's sectorial focus on leveraging digital technologies aligns with STISA-2024's goal of utilizing STI for broad socio-economic development.
5	Encourage international cooperation and partnerships in STI	Stresses strengthening global digital cooperation and governance, indirectly advocating for international collaboration in science, technology, and innovation.	The emphasis on international cooperation and partnerships within the Compact supports STISA-2024's objective of enhancing Africa's STI through global collaboration.
6	Enhance governance and policies related to STI	Advocates for the harmonization of digital policies and regulations to create a conducive environment for STI development.	The Compact's push for harmonized digital policies aligns with STISA-2024's aim of improving governance and policy frameworks for STI.

7	Promote the adoption and adaptation of existing technologies, as well as the development of new and emerging technologies	The overarching goals suggest a conducive environment for adopting and developing technologies, including new and emerging digital technologies.	The promotion of innovation and digital transformation within the Compact indirectly supports the STISA-2024 objective of technological adoption and development.
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Draft ADC and African Union (Malabo) Convention on Cyber Security and Personal Data Protection

S#	Malabo Convention Objectives	Synergy with Draft ADC	Explanation
1	Establish legal frameworks for cyber security and personal data protection	The Compact emphasizes enhancing cybersecurity and data protection, advocating for the enactment and enforcement of robust laws that protect digital ecosystems and personal data.	Directly aligns with the Convention's aim to establish comprehensive legal frameworks across Africa, focusing on cybersecurity and the protection of personal information in the digital space.
2	Promote electronic transactions by ensuring data security and privacy	The overarching goals suggest a conducive environment for secure electronic transactions, implicitly supporting data security and privacy.	The Compact's focus on cybersecurity and data protection indirectly fosters a secure environment for electronic transactions, in line with the Convention's goals.
3	Strengthen the fight against cybercrime	Calls for robust cybersecurity measures to protect digital ecosystems and personal data, contributing to a secure digital environment.	By emphasizing cybersecurity, the Compact aligns with the Convention's objective to combat cybercrime, aiming to create a safer digital space for all Africans.
4	Foster the development of a culture of cyber security and personal data protection	Focuses on enhancing digital literacy and skills, which includes awareness and practices related to cybersecurity and data protection.	The emphasis on digital literacy and skills development indirectly supports the creation of a culture where cybersecurity and data protection are prioritized, echoing the Convention's objectives.
5	Enhance cooperation among AU Member States in cyber security and personal data protection	Stresses strengthening global and regional digital cooperation and governance, which would include cooperation in cybersecurity and data protection among AU Member States.	The Compact's call for enhanced cooperation and governance aligns with the Convention's aim for AU Member States to collaborate on cybersecurity and data protection issues.

Draft ADC and Draft AU Convention on Establishing a Credible Legal Framework for Cyber Security in Africa (Lome Convention).

S#	Lome Convention Objectives	Synergy with Draft ADC	Explanation
1	Establish comprehensive legal frameworks for cybersecurity	The Compact emphasizes enhancing cybersecurity and data protection, advocating for robust measures to protect digital ecosystems and personal data.	The synergy arises from the Compact's advocacy for strong cybersecurity measures alongside the Lome Convention's call for comprehensive legal frameworks. Together, they foster a cohesive approach to creating a secure digital environment across Africa.
2	Promote cooperation among AU Member States in the fight against cybercrime	Stresses strengthening digital cooperation and governance, ensuring Africa's active participation in international digital policy dialogues.	This synergy enhances the collective capacity to combat cybercrime, as the Compact's emphasis on cooperation complements the Lome Convention's objective for coordinated efforts among AU Member States, fostering a united front against cyber threats.
3	Encourage the adoption of cybersecurity best practices and standards	The overarching goals suggest a conducive environment for adopting cybersecurity best practices and standards, indirectly supported by the Compact's initiatives.	The Compact's focus on enhancing digital literacy and skills development creates a foundation for the widespread adoption of best practices and standards, synergizing with the Lome Convention's aims to elevate cybersecurity readiness across Africa.
4	Enhance the protection of critical information infrastructure	Calls for robust cybersecurity measures to protect digital ecosystems and personal data, contributing to the security of critical digital infrastructure.	The combined efforts of the Compact and the Lome Convention to safeguard digital infrastructure enhance the resilience of Africa's critical information systems, creating a more secure and dependable digital environment.

5	Foster capacity building and awareness-raising on cybersecurity issues	Focuses on the enhancement of digital skills and literacy, which includes awareness and practices related to cybersecurity and data protection.	Through complementary initiatives in capacity building and awareness-raising, the synergy between the Compact and the Lome Convention strengthens the overall cybersecurity posture of the continent, empowering individuals, and organizations with the knowledge to protect against cyber threats.
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Draft ADC and Draft AU Convention on Establishing a Credible Legal Framework for Cyber Security in Africa (Lome Convention).

The table below maps the synergy between the “African Digital Compact “ and the Africa Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA):

S#	AFCFTA OBJECTIVES	SYNERGY WITH DRAFT ADC	EXPLANATION
1	Create a single market for goods and services across Africa	Emphasizes the importance of creating a single digital market to facilitate trade and economic integration across Africa.	The Compact's advocacy for digital integration directly supports the AfCFTA's objective by providing the digital tools and infrastructure needed to streamline cross-border trade and service provision.
2	Enhance competitiveness at the industry and enterprise level	Advocates for digital entrepreneurship and the development of digital skills, enhancing the competitiveness of African businesses.	By promoting digital innovation and skills development, the Compact aligns with the AfCFTA's goals to boost enterprise competitiveness through improved efficiency and access to new markets.
3	Promote industrial development through diversification and regional value chain development	Focuses on leveraging digital technologies to enhance industrial and agricultural productivity and create new value chains.	The Compact supports the development of regional value chains by enabling more efficient production, logistics, and distribution through digital solutions, aligning with AfCFTA's industrial diversification goals.

4	Facilitate investment and infrastructure projects	Highlights the need for improved digital infrastructure as a foundation for sustainable economic growth and investment.	The synergy here lies in the Compact's push for robust digital infrastructure, which is crucial for attracting investments and supporting large-scale infrastructure projects under the AfCFTA.
5	Cooperate in all trade-related areas, enhancing regional trade	Stresses the importance of harmonizing digital regulations and policies to simplify regional trade.	By harmonizing digital policies, the Compact aids in removing trade barriers, which complements the AfCFTA's efforts to increase intra-African trade efficiency.
6	Enhance and enforce trade governance and compliance mechanisms	Calls for enhanced digital governance and data protection measures to ensure secure and compliant trade practices.	The Compact's focus on governance and security in digital transactions provides the framework necessary for enforcing trade compliance, crucial for the success of the AfCFTA.

Draft ADC and the unique opportunities and challenges presented by Africa's digital landscape, underpinned by guiding principles tailored to the African context.

The following table showcases how the Draft ADC creates synergies with the opportunities and challenges of Africa's digital landscape. Through strategic initiatives and adherence to guiding principles tailored to the African context, the Compact enhances Africa's ability to leverage its digital transformation for economic growth, societal well-being, and increased competitiveness on the global stage. The synergistic approach not only addresses immediate challenges but also capitalizes on unique opportunities, guiding Africa towards a more inclusive, secure, and prosperous digital future.

S#	Smart Africa Manifesto Objectives	Synergy with Draft ADC	Explanation
1	Rapid Mobile Penetration	The Compact emphasizes leveraging mobile technologies to enhance digital inclusion and access to services, reflecting Africa's rapid mobile penetration.	The synergy here lies in capitalizing on Africa's mobile technology boom to bridge digital divides and expand access to digital services, aligning the Compact's initiatives with the continent's mobile-first landscape.

2	Digital Divide	Focuses on bridging digital divides by making digital technologies accessible and affordable, enhancing digital literacy and skills for all.	The Compact's targeted approach to overcoming the digital divide complements the continent's efforts to ensure equitable digital access, addressing both geographic and socio-economic gaps.
3	Infrastructure Gaps	Advocates for the expansion of digital infrastructure to cover underserved areas, directly addressing infrastructure gaps.	This synergy accelerates efforts to build and enhance digital infrastructure, ensuring that advancements in connectivity reach even the most remote areas of Africa.
4	Cybersecurity Threats	Emphasizes enhancing cybersecurity and data protection, advocating for robust measures to protect digital ecosystems and personal data.	The Compact's focus on cybersecurity creates synergy by strengthening Africa's resilience against cyber threats, enhancing trust and security in the digital space.
5	Youth Bulge and Employment	Highlights the importance of enhancing digital skills and literacy, tapping into the potential of Africa's young and growing population.	By focusing on digital literacy and employment opportunities in the digital sector, the Compact harnesses the potential of Africa's youth, addressing both the challenge of youth unemployment and the opportunity it presents for driving digital innovation.
6	Cross-border Digital Trade and Integration	Stresses the importance of creating a single digital market and harmonizing digital and data policies to facilitate cross-border collaboration.	The synergy enhances Africa's digital market integration, breaking down barriers to digital trade and fostering a unified economic space, leveraging digital transformation to enhance intra-African trade and integration.
7	Innovation Ecosystems	Encourages digital entrepreneurship and innovation ecosystems, fostering economic diversification and job creation in the digital domain.	This synergy bolsters Africa's innovation capacity, aligning the Compact's support for entrepreneurship and innovation with the continent's goal to become a global innovation hub.

Conclusions

The African Digital Compact (ADC), along with the strategic documents and initiatives outlined by the African Union Commission (AUC), represents a pivotal step towards realizing Africa's digital future. These documents collectively underscore a deep commitment to leveraging digital technology as a cornerstone for socio-economic development, inclusivity, and sustainability across the continent.

Through harmonized efforts and strategic synergy, the ADC and related strategies aim to bridge digital divides, enhance cybersecurity, promote digital literacy, and foster innovation, laying a solid foundation for a prosperous digital economy. The alignment with key AU strategic directives—ranging from the promotion of universal connectivity and digital public goods to the empowerment of Africa's youth and the advancement of gender equality—embodies a comprehensive approach to overcoming the unique challenges and seizing the opportunities within Africa's digital landscape.

This collaborative endeavour not only positions Africa to capitalize on its digital potential but also amplifies its voice and impact on the global stage, heralding a new era of digital transformation that is inclusive, secure, and reflective of Africa's rich cultural heritage and collective aspirations. It is a clarion call to all stakeholders to unite in this transformative journey, ensuring that the digital revolution not only advances Africa's position in the world but also enriches the lives of its people, fostering a future where digital inclusivity and innovation drive sustainable development and prosperity for all.

Appendix III: African Cybersecurity/ Digital Compact Stakeholders

S#	Stakeholder	Description	Activity	Value Proposition
1	Academia	Universities, research institutions, and training centres that play a critical role in providing education, training, and research in cybersecurity.	Play a critical role in providing education, training, and research in cybersecurity.	Provides the teaching, learning, research, and development needed to enhance an anti-cybercrime culture and support development.
2	Civil Society	This includes non-government organizations, civil society organizations, media, and consumers.	They play an important role in promoting cybersecurity literacy, raising awareness, and advocating for the protection of rights and interests in the cyberspace.	The Compact's targeted approach to overcoming the digital divide complements the continent's efforts to ensure equitable digital access, addressing both geographic and socio-economic gaps.
3	Government	This includes the national and regional cybersecurity agencies, law enforcement agencies, defence and intelligence agencies, and critical infrastructure providers.	Implement multi-stakeholder national policies and strategies, identify, and protect critical information infrastructure, adopt cybercrime legislation that prioritizes the protection of human rights, and improve international cooperation and engagement. National Security Strategists must develop the requisite Philosophies, Principles and Ethics upon which our Policy, Strategies, and accountability frameworks for Cognitive or Artificial Intelligence (AI), Robotics, and cyberspace. Security sector actors increase capacity to investigate cyber-enabled and AI and cyber dependent malicious activity, defend military information systems from external threats, coordinate critical infrastructure protection efforts, align information technology with population-centric military strategies and support requisite policies that uphold the rule of law. Political and public sector strategic decision makers who can drive or impeded the development and implementation of a strategy.	Government has statutory duties to provide clear and fair operating regimes and deterrence, towards ensuring optimal stakeholder partnerships.
4	Innovators	People, Start-ups, and organisations of all capacities	Takes the output of Research and Development to market as new technological products and services.	Practical implementation of ideas that result in the introduction of new goods or services or improvement in offering goods or services.

5	International organizations	This includes regional and international organizations such as the African Union, the United Nations, and the African Development Bank that play a critical role in promoting international cooperation, policy development, and capacity building in the field of cybersecurity.	External actors provide education and training opportunities for African cybersecurity professionals, invest in locally managed and driven efforts to build requisite capacity, and limit the sale of sensitive surveillance technologies to regimes implicated in human rights abuses.	Provide investment, capacity building and related policy support.
6	Media	Physical and online newspapers, magazines, radio, television, radio, billboards, telephone, the Internet, fax, billboards, and other fora.	Enhance awareness and a culture of accountability and promote awareness initiatives.	Provide channels of communication through which society disseminates information, entertainment, education, promotional messages, and related data.
7	Private sector	They own much of the infrastructure and platforms.	This includes telecommunication companies, service providers, financial institutions, critical infrastructure operators, and technology companies. Private businesses assess and grow their cybersecurity workforces, provide security as a service, and ensure the protection of critical information infrastructure they operate.	Invests, develops, sells, and purchases most of the innovative and related solutions.



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African Digital Compact

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