ECOSOCC CITIZENS' FORUM ON DEMOCRACY & INSTITUTIONAL RESILIENCE
SUMMARY REPORT

18th - 19th July 2024 Kempinski Hotel,
Gold Coast City - Accra, Ghana

An Organ of the
African Union

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Executive Summary

The African Union's Economic Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC) convened the 3rd Annual Citizens' Forum in Accra, Ghana from 18-19 July 2024. The Forum coincided with the 20th anniversary celebrations of the founding of ECOSOCC. It was dedicated to reflections by civil society actors and policy makers on progress, gaps, challenges and prospects for strengthening the role of citizens in advancing and consolidating democracy, peace, and development in Africa.

The forum acknowledged that significant progress had been achieved in advancing democratic governance in Africa amidst persistent challenges. Participants noted that while the AU and Member States had adopted progressive norms, standards and established institutions to safeguard democracy, implementation was weak. They called for strengthened Pan-African collaboration to advance democratic governance and sustainable progress with a focus on implementation at national level as well as tracking compliance by citizens.

Democratic governance and responsive leadership were emphasized as vital, with calls to uphold the rule of law, protect human rights, ensure transparency, and hold leaders accountable. The forum championed citizen engagement, inclusion and participation in decision making advocating for the removal of restrictions on civic space, increased civic education, consultation and access to information. It also underscored the importance of investing in women and youth development and promoting peacebuilding efforts.

Rebuilding social cohesion and trust between people and institutions was recognized as essential, with a focus on enhancing transparency, accountability, addressing impunity, corruption and institutional responsiveness. The importance of independent, adequately resourced and capacitated institutions that promote and safeguard democratic governance was equally underscored. The forum called for proactive measures to prevent and address unconstitutional changes of government, including strengthening constitutional order, ensuring judicial independence, and addressing root causes of instability. Promoting civic engagement through inclusive governance, youth capacity building, and regional cooperation were equally identified as key focus.

The Forum acknowledged that while the continent and its leaders faced internal challenges of governance, the role of external actors including multinational corporations could not be overlooked. Besides geopolitics and a new scramble for the continent's resources by external actors, illicit financial flows continue to drain necessary resources for sustainable development. The Forum thus called for implementation of the recommendations from the African Union High-Level Panel (AU HLP) to disrupt commercial channels used for illicit financial transfers and strengthen cross-border cooperation and intelligence sharing to dismantle commercial networks involved in IFFs.

The forum recognized the impact of technology, emphasizing the need for a rights-based approach, bridging the digital divide, and supporting citizen-led innovation. Strengthening healthcare systems, fostering indigenous AI solutions, and creating an enabling environment for AI adoption were identified as priorities for improving health outcomes. The forum concluded with calls to action for all stakeholders to work collaboratively in implementing key recommendations, paving the way for a more democratic, peaceful, and prosperous

Africa. The following overarching reflections and recommendations emerged:

a. Reinforce Pan-African Solidarity and Identity: Strengthen regional collaboration, knowledge sharing, and collective action to consolidate and promote democratic governance, enhance human security, uphold the rule of law, promote and protect human rights and attain sustainable and transformative socio economic development in line with Africa Agenda 2063 aspirations. . This includes prioritizing the implementation of existing AU frameworks in particular Africa Agenda 2063, while making them more responsive to the needs and aspirations of future generations. This includes promoting and realization of Africa regional integration of African peoples, mutual collaboration and collaboration among Member States and comparable share of innovative and progressive practices and experiences.

b. Promote good governance and responsive leadership: Uphold the rule of law, promote and protect human rights ensuring transparency in government processes, and holding leaders accountable for equitable and fair share and management of national resources and service delivery. This entails strengthening democratic institutions, implementing anti-corruption measures, and fostering open dialogue with citizens. Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) to remain vigilant and hold governments accountable through advocacy, promoting legal reforms, and utilizing technology for monitoring governance processes.

c. Empower citizens for active participation: Removing restrictions on civic space, adopt and implement enabling frameworks and policies for access to information and mechanism of providing feedback loops to citizens on matters of national interest that affect citizens including budget making, allocation of resources and public expenditure; invest in civic education programs including in schools, and create platforms for citizen participation and inclusion in decision-making processes. This includes accessible grievance redressal systems and budget processes that allow citizens to hold leaders accountable. CSOs adopt and deploy digital technologies and innovation and work with communities to build awareness of democratic rights, empower citizens to participate actively, and facilitate citizen engagement and public awareness campaigns.

d. Invest in youth development and leadership: Develop national youth leadership and development strategies that address youth concerns and create opportunities for meaningful participation in decision-making processes. This includes investing in education, skills training, and mentorship programs, alongside addressing gender disparities to ensure equal opportunities for young women. Youth organizations to advocate for policies that promote youth inclusion and empower young people by building capacity and leadership skills, fostering collaboration across the continent, and holding governments accountable for their commitments.

e. Strengthen conflict resolution and peacebuilding: Prioritize internal solutions and regional cooperation for addressing and resolving conflicts in Africa. This includes a focus on the root causes of conflict and promoting media coverage that fosters peacebuilding efforts. Working with AU and RECs mechanisms for mediation, dispute resolution including the African Peace and Security Architecture, African Governance Architecture and dedicated platforms such as Panel of the Wise, FEMwise at regional and national level. This includes strengthening and supporting where they do not exist, establishment of national peace

architectures such as National Peace Councils and ensuring active participation of youth, women, interfaith representatives, civil society and community based leadership structures.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Context

The African Union's ECOSOCC held its 3rd Annual Citizens' Forum in Accra, Ghana, from 18-19 July 2024. The 2024 convening coincided with ECOSOCC's 20th-anniversary celebrations. In addition to celebrating ECOSOCC's achievements over the past 20 years, the Forum provided a platform for reflection and introspection on the state of democracy in Africa and the roles citizens can play to further enhance democratic governance.

The Forum recognized and acknowledged the progress Africa is making in its democratic journey, including the number of countries holding democratic elections. However, it also highlighted challenges threatening to undo some of these achievements, such as weakening social cohesion, diminishing public trust between citizens and their governments, rising human insecurity, resurgence of unconstitutional changes of government, extremism, weakening democratic institutions, poor democratic outcomes or dividends, impunity, corruption, geopolitical dynamics, and socio-economic hardship. The reflections emphasized the importance of existing continental, regional and national frameworks like the African Charter on Democracy, Elections, and Governance (ACDEG) while also noting their limited effectiveness in curbing these challenges.

The Forum focused on four key areas:

1. The future of peace, democracy, and development in Africa, reflecting the role of the African Governance Architecture (AGA) and the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA).
2. The state of democratic institutions in Africa, aiming to rebuild trust between citizens and institutions.
3. Illicit financial flows, seeking an African perspective on global tax cooperation.
4. The impact of technology on democracy and health resilience in Africa.

1.2. Objectives

The stated aims of the forum included:

a. **Promote Democratic Governance:** Reignite a commitment to democratic principles across Africa through inclusive participation, ensuring that all voices, particularly those from civil society organizations (CSOs), are heard and integrated into policymaking processes. To explore strategies to remove barriers to citizen engagement, such as limited access to information or restrictions on freedom of speech and by strengthening the role of CSOs and promoting open dialogue between citizens and policymakers.

b. **Enhance Institutional Resilience:** Recognize that strong, accountable institutions are essential for a functional democracy. To examine the current state of African institutions, identifying weaknesses that make them vulnerable to corruption or manipulation, and proposing strategies for strengthening their capacity and resilience. These include promoting reforms that enhance transparency and accountability within institutions or fostering greater collaboration between different branches of government. To create institutions that inspire public trust and function effectively in the face of internal and external challenges.

c. **Foster Trust Between People and Institutions:** To bridge the gap between the African citizens and their governing institutions by identifying ways to rebuild trust and social cohesion that may have been eroded by limited accountability, impunity, corruption,

inequitable share and mismanagement of state resources, and lack of inclusion, participation and responsiveness to citizen concerns. To explore strategies to promote transparency and accountability in government processes, promote and protect human and peoples' rights, uphold rule of law, justice and address impunity, ensure that public officials and institutions are genuinely responsive to the needs and aspirations of the people they serve, fostering open communication and demonstrating a commitment to the public good.

d. **Tackle Illicit Financial Flows (IFFs):** Recognize that illicit financial flows (IFFs) pose a significant threat to democratic development and economic stability in Africa. To identify effective strategies for global tax cooperation, including measures to close loopholes and recover stolen assets. To explore mechanisms for holding multinational corporations accountable and ensuring that resources are used for the benefit of African citizens. To create a more equitable financial landscape that supports sustainable development and strengthens democratic resilience.

e. **Leverage Digital Governance and Innovation:** To appreciate the potential of digital technologies to transform governance processes and empower citizens. To explore the role of technologies like artificial intelligence (AI) in enhancing transparency and accountability in government, promoting citizen participation, and strengthening service delivery. Acknowledge and address threats to digital abuse and spread of misinformation and disinformation as well as violation of citizens privacy rights. To examine the potential of technology to bolster health resilience during pandemics by facilitating remote communication, data collection, and resource allocation. To leverage digital innovation responsibly to create a more inclusive, efficient, accountable and responsive form of governance in Africa.

This report is a summary and synthesis of key reflections, recommendations and calls to action made by participants for consideration by policy makers at Member States, African Union and other relevant stakeholders including civil society actors and strategic partners. The report is structured into two main parts. Part one is this introduction which sets out the context and objectives of the forum. Part Two highlights the overarching reflections and recommendations and call to action to key stakeholders with a focus on each of the four key thematic areas of the forum.

2. REFLECTIONS AND CALL TO ACTION

Acknowledging collaborative efforts of key stakeholders, including the AU, Member States, African Union Commission (AUC), relevant AU bodies and institutions, Regional Economic Communities (RECs), and other involved actors in effectively implementing the AGA and APSA frameworks and driving the future of peace, democracy, and development in Africa, the forum made the following reflections and calls to action.

2.1. Role and Contribution of the African Governance Architecture (AGA) & the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA)

A. **Member States**

1. **Enhance compliance and implementation of AU norms and standards:** Beyond ratification, adopt national legal frameworks for domestication and implementation of AU norms and standards on democratic governance especially the African Charter on

Democracy, Election and Governance in Africa. As per the commitments expressed upon ratification, track and report on gaps, challenges and progress made to implement these standards to the treaty monitoring institutions and work closely with civil society and citizens including through development of technology based tracking and monitoring dashboards that are accessible and provide feedback loops to citizens.

2. **Pan African mobilization of resources for the Union:** Implement the AU institutional reforms and ensure self-sustenance. This entails Member States and African private sector, institutions, foundations and citizens contributing their own resources to the Union especially to the AGA and APSA institutions reducing dependency on development aid leveraging on African solidarity, pan Africanism and the African Union's capacity to mobilize resources within the continent. This includes initiatives such as adequate resourcing of the AU Peace Fund and broadening its scope to include supporting and funding conflict prevention efforts. Investing in democratic governance, peace and security is at the heart of African ability to manage its own affairs and attend to priorities and challenges facing the continent in a sustainable manner given the global dynamics and need to drive the continent's own agenda based on Pan African priorities, values, principles and identity.

3. **Strengthen democratic governance by advocating for, promoting, and enforcing democratic norms and practices across Africa.** This includes building robust governance structures, fostering equitable resource distribution, enhancing capacity building, fortifying institutions, reforming electoral processes, and holding Member States accountable for democratic adherence.

4. **Amplify citizen voices and foster inclusive decision-making** by establishing accessible platforms for public participation, empowering civil society organizations to effectively advocate for citizens' interests, and cultivating strong partnerships between government, civil society, and the private sector to co-create and implement solutions to pressing societal challenges. This will be achieved through creating spaces for open dialogue, ensuring equitable representation, and leveraging diverse perspectives to inform policies and programs that benefit all members of society. The ECOSOCC National Chapters are critical actors in this regard and thus essentially to strengthen them where they exist and establish and resource them in AU Member States where they are yet to be launched.

5. **Foster environmental stewardship and sustainable development** by integrating comprehensive environmental education into educational systems, empowering communities with the knowledge and skills to sustainably manage land and resources, and promoting innovative, eco-friendly practices that drive economic growth while preserving natural ecosystems. This entails fostering a deep appreciation for the environment, building capacity for sustainable livelihoods, and creating policies that incentivize responsible resource utilization and conservation.

6. **Foster lasting peace and security, prioritizing human security** by strategically investing in comprehensive conflict prevention, mediation, and post-conflict reconstruction efforts, with a particular focus on vulnerable communities. Foster collaborative partnerships between governments, civil society, and the private sector to build resilient infrastructure, including housing, transportation, and essential services, in conflict-affected regions. Prioritize the protection of civilians, human rights, and the rule of law to create a sustainable foundation for peace and development.

7. **Address urbanization and housing crisis** through substantial investments in public infrastructure, such as transportation and utilities, within urban areas. Empower communities to participate in housing decisions to ensure that housing needs are adequately met. Promote equitable urban development by addressing spatial inequalities

and strengthening local governance in creating sustainable and resilient cities. Adopt a comprehensive approach that prioritizes the needs of vulnerable populations, including youth and internally displaced persons, is essential for building inclusive and just societies.

B. African Union

1. **Strengthen Member State capacity:** Conduct comprehensive assessments of Member States' capacities to identify specific needs and gaps in implementing Agenda 2063. Develop, implement, and enforce clear, concise, and easily understandable regulations and directives aligned with Agenda 2063 goals. Prioritize technical assistance to build institutional and human capacity within Member States. Focus technical assistance on strengthening the implementation of AGA and APSA frameworks.

2. **Reorient and integrate the AGA and APSA Frameworks:** Commission a comprehensive review of the AGA and APSA frameworks to identify their strategic areas of convergence, divergence, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. Shift the paradigm from a focus on conflict management and resolution to structural conflict prevention as well as state-centric security focus to a human-centric approach that prioritizes the protection of individuals and communities. Integrate democratic governance, human rights, gender equality, and social justice principles into the core of the AGA and APSA frameworks. Develop early warning systems and structural conflict prevention mechanisms to address root causes of insecurity. Enhance the AU's capacity to conduct conflict analysis, mediation, and post-conflict reconstruction and development. Foster collaboration between the AU and regional economic communities (RECs) to address transnational security threats. Invest in training and capacity building for AU personnel to equip them with the necessary skills to implement the revised framework.

3. **Integrate human rights and social justice:** Position human rights and social justice as foundational pillars within the AGA and APSA frameworks. Develop clear indicators and benchmarks to measure progress in integrating human rights and social justice principles. Ensure human rights impact assessments are conducted for all policies and programs under AGA and APSA. Empower civil society organizations to participate actively in the development and monitoring of human rights-related initiatives. Strengthen national human rights institutions to effectively promote and protect human rights. Allocate adequate resources for the implementation of human rights and social justice components within AGA and APSA. Promote awareness and education on human rights and social justice among policymakers, government officials, and the general public.

4. **Strengthen AGA and APSA Monitoring and Evaluation:** Develop and implement comprehensive monitoring, evaluation, and accountability mechanisms for the AGA and APSA. Enhance scrutiny of Peace and Security Council decisions. Bridge the gap between policy formulation and implementation through actionable programs. Integrate AGA and APSA beyond a joint secretariat to normative, policy, and political level.

C. ECOSOCC

1. **Broaden and foster inclusive participation of citizens:** Facilitate inclusive dialogue among civil society, government representatives, traditional leaders, youth, women, persons with disabilities, and other marginalized groups to ensure that the diverse perspectives and needs of all segments of society are considered in the development and implementation of AGA and APSA frameworks. Employ participatory approaches such as community consultations, focus group discussions, and social media engagement to amplify marginalized voices and build consensus.

2. **Strengthen ECOSOCC national chapters**: Leverage ECOSOCC's National Chapters to promote good governance, transparency, and accountability by supporting capacity building initiatives, knowledge sharing platforms, and advocacy campaigns. Work closely with member states to enhance the effectiveness and responsiveness of governance institutions. Promote the adoption of e-governance and digital technologies to improve service delivery, reduce corruption, and enhance citizen participation.

3. **Facilitate capacity building and institutional strengthening**: Facilitate capacity building initiatives tailored to the specific needs of national and regional institutions involved in the AGA and APSA, including training on leadership, policy development, project management, and monitoring and evaluation. Provide technical assistance and mentorship to enhance institutional performance and effectiveness. Strengthen collaboration among institutions to foster knowledge sharing and resource optimization.

4. **Promote knowledge generation and innovation**: Develop and disseminate high-quality research and policy briefs that analyze the impacts of climate change on peace and security, focusing on the experiences and perspectives of civil society organizations. Support the development of early warning systems and climate-resilient governance mechanisms. Facilitate dialogues and workshops to explore innovative approaches to addressing the nexus between climate change, governance, and security. Promote the use of data and technology to inform decision-making and improve policy outcomes.

D. Civil Society Organizations

1. **Champion context-specific advocacy and foster African-centered citizen engagement** to effectively address the unique challenges facing Africa by deeply understanding the local realities, CSOs can tailor their strategies for maximum impact. Cultivate a vibrant culture of African-centered citizen engagement by empowering communities to actively participate in decision-making processes, hold leaders accountable, and drive positive change. CSOs to lead by example in fostering inclusive platforms for dialogue, capacity building, and knowledge sharing, thereby strengthening the voices and agency of citizens across the continent.

2. **Shift from problem-solving to vision-driven leadership** to accelerate progress towards Agenda 2063. CSOs to decisively shift their focus from merely addressing problems to inspiring and co-creating a shared vision for Africa's future by adopting a vision-driven approach. CSOs to harness the collective potential of human resources to catalyze transformative change through strategic realignment of priorities, building strong partnerships, and mobilizing communities around compelling narrative of Africa's aspirations. CSOs to champion positive and forward-looking agenda, CSOs can ignite hope, inspire action, and drive sustainable development.

3. **Advocate for social equity to strengthen civil society's role in democracy** to ensure that civil society can fully contribute to democratic processes and vigorously advocate for social equity. Challenge systemic inequalities, promote inclusive governance, and protect the rights of marginalized groups. Create opportunities for level playing field by effectively participating in policy formulation, implementation, and monitoring. Dismantle barriers that hinder civil society's engagement and empower organizations to hold power to account. Advocate for an equitable society where diverse voices are amplified, and civil society thrives as a cornerstone of democracy.

D. Strategic Partners

1. **Provide targeted technical support, comprehensive training, and sustained capacity building to strengthen the institutional capacity of African governments and civil society organizations to implement AGA and APSA frameworks effectively**. Facilitate robust knowledge exchange platforms to share best practices, lessons learned, and innovative approaches. Collaborate with academic institutions and research centers to generate evidence-based knowledge and inform policy development. Support the development of national action plans aligned with AGA and APSA goals, providing technical assistance throughout the planning, implementation, and monitoring phases.

2. **Provide financial, human and technical resources including grants, loans, and investments to support the implementation of AGA and APSA priorities**. Prioritize resource allocation to critical areas such as infrastructure development, human capital development, and technology adoption. Establish sustainable financing mechanisms to ensure long-term support for AGA and APSA initiatives. Leverage public-private partnerships to optimize resource utilization and achieve greater impact.

3. **Forge strategic partnerships with African Union Member States, regional economic communities, and international organizations to create a unified front in addressing governance and security challenges**. Facilitate cross-border cooperation to promote regional integration and shared prosperity. Empower youth and women as active participants in peacebuilding and governance processes. Strengthen civil society engagement to enhance accountability and responsiveness.

4. **Support preventive diplomacy and early warning systems to address conflict root causes and prevent escalation**. Mediate and facilitate inclusive dialogue among conflicting parties to build trust and find common ground. Invest in community-led peacebuilding initiatives that promote reconciliation, social cohesion, and justice. Strengthen the capacity of regional peacekeeping forces to effectively respond to crises. Advocate for the protection of civilians in conflict-affected areas and ensure humanitarian access.

2.2. Building Trust Between People and Institutions

A. Member States

1. **Review leadership recruitment processes:** Explore mechanisms and processes that increase citizen participation and strengthen measures and processes that promote integrity, ethical and accountable leadership at all levels. Consider incorporating primaries or other forms of citizen input into candidate selection. Promote meritocracy, establish clear criteria for leadership positions based on qualifications, experience, and commitment to democratic principles. Reduce corruption, strengthen anti-corruption measures throughout the electoral process.

2. **Invest in strong and capable institutions:** Allocate adequate resources to independent judiciaries and institutions that safeguard democratic governance including national human rights institutions, office of the ombudsperson, auditor general to ensure fair and impartial judiciaries that can uphold the rule of law, effective legislatures to support legislatures that can hold the executive branch accountable and represent the will of the people. Safeguard and protect access to institutions and media to promote a free and independent media that can provide citizens with accurate information including through digital technologies and hold leaders accountable.

3. **Address structural drivers of inequality:** Implement policies to reduce poverty: Invest in social safety nets, education, and job creation programs. Empower marginalized groups, promote policies that address discrimination based on gender, ethnicity, religion, or sexual orientation. Promote inclusive development to ensure that all citizens have a stake in the economy and benefit from development efforts.

4. **Increase transparency and accountability:** Develop mechanisms like right to information laws to Guarantee citizens' right to access government information. Whistleblower protections to encourage individuals to report corruption and wrongdoing without fear of retaliation. Establish independent bodies to investigate allegations of corruption and abuse of power.

5. **Press freedom in Africa:** Member states to reform media laws to conform with both African and international standards on freedom of expression, particularly aligning with the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and the Declaration of Principles on Freedom of Expression and Access to Information in Africa. This reform should ensure that journalists and media practitioners can practice their profession freely and independently, without undue interference. Strengthening the legal framework to support an open and vibrant media landscape is crucial for fostering an informed public and a resilient democracy.

6. **Safety and Security of Journalists in Africa:** Member states to adopt comprehensive safety protocols and the establishment of rapid response mechanism to address threats swiftly. Ensure that crimes against journalists are thoroughly investigated and perpetrators held accountable, addressing the impunity often associated with such crimes. This approach should be in strict alignment with African and international human rights instruments. Integrating these measures with the African Union's "Silencing the Guns" initiative will underscore the vital role of journalists in promoting peace and democratic governance, demonstrating a commitment to creating a safe environment for the press across the continent.

B. **African Union**

1. **Invest in democratic governance:** Support member States to implement AU Shared values instruments on democratic governance especially the ACDEG. Provide technical and requisite capacity strengthening upon request including through the AU peace Fund and support for electoral processes, and ensure legitimacy and credibility of elections in Africa. Provide technical expertise to Member States on issues like electoral reform and constitutional development. Offer training programs for government officials, civil society actors, and media professionals on democratic principles and practices.

2. **Facilitate knowledge sharing:** Create platforms and mechanisms including through technology for sharing best practices and lessons learned in democratic governance: Organize forums for African leaders and stakeholders to share experiences and learn from each other. Develop online platforms where countries can share resources and best practices on democratic governance.

3. **Promote human rights:** Uphold human rights and fundamental freedoms as essential pillars of democracy by strengthening the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights. Provide the Commission with the resources and mandate to effectively investigate and address human rights abuses. Encourage and support Member States to ratify and implement key human rights treaties such as the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights.

C. ECOSOCC

1. **Organize regular dialogues:** Continue to hold forums and discussions on the state of democracy in Africa, focusing on dialogues that delve deeper into specific challenges, like youth engagement in democracy or the role of civil society in promoting accountability. Hold discussions that address the unique challenges and opportunities faced by different regions and countries.

2. **Strengthen feedback mechanisms:** Ensure effective feedback loops to capture participant perspectives and improve future discussions by gathering feedback from participants on the content, format, and outcomes of each dialogue. Establish advisory committees composed of civil society representatives, academics, and other experts to provide ongoing guidance and feedback on ECOSOCC's work.

3. **Focus on shared values:** Shift the conversation from definitions of democracy to the underlying values of equality, freedom, and justice by framing discussions around shared African values. Highlight concepts like Ubuntu (humanity) and Harambee (working together) as core principles of democratic governance. Promote citizen participation and ownership to define what democracy means to them and how it can be realized in their own contexts.

4. **Document and share knowledge:** Increase efforts to document the work of ECOSOCC and other actors in promoting democracy by publishing reports and case studies: Document the outcomes of ECOSOCC dialogues and share best practices for promoting democracy. Develop online resources and online repository of resources on democracy in Africa, including reports, case studies, and educational materials.

5. **Demand accountability:** Hold leaders accountable for their actions and demand transparency in governance by monitoring government spending and policies, filing public interest lawsuits to challenge government actions that violate the law or constitution and organize peaceful protests and demonstrations to raise awareness of public concerns.

6. **Engage with citizens:** Develop strategies for meaningful citizen engagement in political processes by organizing voter education campaigns to educate citizens about their rights and responsibilities as voters. Mobilize citizens to participate in elections and to encourage citizens to register to vote and cast their ballots. Organize public forums and discussions where citizens can voice their concerns and ideas.

7. **Build trust:** Work to rebuild trust between citizens and institutions through effective communication and responsiveness by promoting transparency and sharing information about their activities and goals with the public. Listen to the needs and concerns of

citizens and work to address them. Civil society organizations should also be transparent and accountable to their constituents.

8. **Advocate for reform:** Push for reforms to strengthen democratic institutions and processes by lobbying governments and policymakers to advocate for legislative reforms that promote democracy and good governance. Raise public awareness about the importance of democratic reforms and mobilize support for these reforms. Collaborate with other stakeholders including political parties, media organizations, and other civil society groups to advocate for democratic reforms.

D. Strategic Partners

1. **Support capacity building:** Provide resources and expertise to help African institutions improve their democratic practices by funding training programs that train government officials, civil society actors, and media professionals on democratic principles and practices. Provide technical assistance on issues like electoral reform, constitutional development, and human rights protection. Share best practices and connect African institutions with policymakers and practitioners from other regions who have experience with democratic reforms.

2. **Promote human rights:** Advocate for the respect of human rights and democratic principles in Africa by speaking out against human rights abuses to condemn human rights violations and call for accountability. Support human rights defenders and organizations working to protect human rights in Africa. Condition aid to improvements in human rights and democratic governance.

3. **Share knowledge and experience:** Offer knowledge and best practices from other regions to support democratic development in Africa by organizing exchange programs between African and international experts on democratic governance. Support research and scholarship on democratic practices and institutions in Africa. Develop educational resources on democracy and human rights for use in African schools and communities.

2.3. Preventing Unconstitutional Changes of Government (UCGs)

A. Member States

1. **Strengthen constitutional order: Promote and protect fidelity to constitutional order and rule of law and safeguard guarantees that protect and promote citizens fundamental rights and freedoms. Where necessary, undertake** comprehensive reviews of national constitutions, involving broad public consultations, to ensure they reflect fundamental democratic principles like separation of powers, checks and balances, and limitations on presidential terms. Address potential loopholes that could be exploited for constitutional manipulation.

2. **Guarantee the independence of the judiciary** by appointing judges based on merit and qualifications, not political affiliation. Provide adequate funding and resources for a functional judiciary. Uphold judicial independence and protecting judges from intimidation and harassment. Promote public education on the constitution and citizens' rights by integrating constitutional literacy programs into school curriculums. Organize

public awareness campaigns on the content and importance of the constitution. Make constitutions easily accessible to citizens in local languages and through online platforms.

3. **Address structural root causes of conflict and insecurity:** Invest in inclusive economic development and poverty reduction strategies by diversifying economies to reduce dependence on natural resource-based economy. Prioritize investments in education, healthcare, and social welfare programs. Promote inclusive growth that benefits all citizens, particularly marginalized groups.

4. **Address social inequalities and ethnic tensions** through dialogue and reconciliation programs by creating platforms for open and inclusive dialogue between different ethnic and social groups. Support initiatives that promote social cohesion and address historical grievances. Foster a national identity that transcends ethnic and regional divisions.

5. **Combat corruption** through robust legal frameworks and enforcement mechanisms by strengthening anti-corruption laws and institutions. Protect whistleblowers and ensure their safety and anonymity. Hold corrupt officials accountable through fair and transparent judicial processes.

B. **African Union**

1. **Promote early Warning and Response mechanisms at continental, regional and national levels:** Develop and implement an early warning system to identify potential triggers of UCGs by monitoring political developments in member states through regular reporting and country visits. Identify early signs of political tension, disrespect for constitutional norms, and human rights abuses. Analyze trends in economic hardship, social unrest, and military activity.

2. **Strengthen the capacity of the AU Peace and Security Council and APSA pillars** to respond swiftly to UCGs by providing adequate resources for the AU Peace and Security Council to deploy mediation teams and peacekeeping missions. Develop clear guidelines for AU intervention in cases of UCGs, balancing the principles of non-interference and responsibility to protect. Strengthen the AU's capacity for conflict prevention, mediation, and post-conflict reconstruction.

3. **Provide mediation and conflict resolution support** to member states facing political crises by deploying experienced mediators to facilitate dialogue between conflicting parties. Offer technical assistance to member states in developing national peacebuilding strategies. Support the work of regional peacebuilding organizations and civil society actors.

4. **Uphold and promote the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (ACDEG)** by providing resources and technical assistance to member states for implementing and reporting compliance with the ACDEG. Establish a monitoring mechanism to track progress in implementing the ACDEG and hold member states accountable. Periodically review and update the ACDEG to address emerging challenges to democracy in Africa.

5. **Develop clear guidelines for Member States on constitutional amendments and democratic transitions** by establishing clear standards for democratic constitutional amendments, prohibiting changes that undermine democratic principles or extend presidential terms. Develop guidelines for conducting peaceful and democratic transitions of power, including provisions for free and fair elections and respect for the outcome of elections.

6. **Strengthen the capacity of the African Peer Review Mechanisms to support Member states peer accountability for democratic practices.** Support Member States implement the recommendations of the APRM to address democratic shortcomings in M   ember States including through resource mobilization and technical support as well as peer support through skills sharing and lessons learnt platforms.

C. ECOSOCC

7. **Engage citizens, youth and marginalized groups** in discussions on good governance and conflict prevention by creating youth parliaments and other platforms for youth participation in decision-making processes. Support the inclusion of women and other marginalized groups in peacebuilding and governance initiatives. This could include facilitating regional dialogues and forums to discuss UCGs and promote democratic values by bringing together representatives of civil society, government, youth, women, and religious groups. Facilitate open and inclusive discussions on the dangers of UCGs and strategies for preventing them. Provide platforms for citizens to share their perspectives and experiences.

8. **Provide platforms** for citizens to hold regional and national leaders accountable by organizing public hearings and debates where citizens can question leaders about their policies and actions. Support the use of social media and other communication technologies to promote citizen accountability.

9. **Raise awareness about UCGs** and the importance of constitutionalism by developing educational materials on UCGs, constitutionalism, and human rights. Organize workshops and training programs for civil society actors, journalists, and educators. Utilize media outlets to broadcast messages about the dangers of UCGs and the importance of democracy. Advocate for peaceful and democratic transitions of power within member states by working with regional and international bodies to pressure governments to respect constitutional term limits and hold credible elections. Launch public campaigns to raise awareness about the importance of peaceful transitions and respect for the democratic process.

10. **Develop educational materials on democracy and human rights** for citizens in West Africa by collaborating with educators and curriculum developers to integrate human rights and democratic principles into school curriculums. Translate educational materials into local languages and distributing them through community centers and religious institutions. Utilize innovative technologies like mobile apps and radio programs to disseminate educational materials.

D. **Civil Society Organizations**

1. **Educate citizens about their rights and responsibilities** in a democracy by organizing voter education campaigns that inform citizens about candidate platforms, polling procedures, and their right to vote. Develop civic education programs that teach citizens about fundamental democratic principles, such as separation of powers, rule of law, and freedom of expression. Utilize various communication channels, including radio broadcasts, community meetings, and social media, to reach diverse audiences.

2. **Mobilize citizens to participate in peaceful protests** and demonstrations against UCGs by organizing and coordinating peaceful demonstrations to protest against unconstitutional actions by governments. Utilize social media to mobilize citizens and raise awareness about protests. Ensure that protests are peaceful and lawful to maintain public support and avoid government crackdowns.

3. **Monitor elections and advocate for transparency and accountability** in government processes by deploying citizen observers to polling stations to monitor elections for irregularities. Compile and report evidence of electoral fraud or intimidation to relevant authorities and international observers. Advocate for reforms to electoral laws and institutions to strengthen transparency and accountability in elections.

4. **Monitor government actions and hold leaders accountable** for human rights violations by documenting instances of human rights abuses, such as arbitrary arrests, torture, and suppression of dissent. Submit reports to national and international human rights bodies. Engage in public advocacy to hold perpetrators of human rights abuses accountable.

5. **Report on corruption and abuses of power to relevant national and international bodies** by investigating allegations of corruption and gathering evidence through whistleblowing hotlines and investigative journalism. Report corruption cases to anti-corruption agencies and relevant judicial authorities. Cooperate with international anti-corruption bodies to investigate and prosecute corruption cases.

6. **Document cases of UCGs and advocate for justice and accountability for perpetrators by collecting evidence of unconstitutional actions** by governments, such as forced disappearances, illegal detentions, and violations of freedom of assembly. Collaborate with lawyers and human rights defenders to file lawsuits against perpetrators of UCGs. Advocate for international sanctions and other punitive measures against governments that commit UCGs.

7. **Build strong networks among CSOs** to share best practices and resources by establishing regional platforms for information sharing and collaboration between CSOs. Organize capacity-building workshops and training programs for CSOs on topics such as advocacy, election monitoring, and human rights reporting. Share successful advocacy strategies and lessons learned across countries.

8. **Collaborate with religious groups and media outlets to amplify their messages** by engaging with religious leaders to promote peace, tolerance, and respect for democratic principles. Work with journalists to investigate corruption, human rights abuses, and

threats to democracy. Utilize religious networks and media platforms to disseminate information about UCGs and the importance of democracy.

9. **Engage with the diaspora to mobilize international support for democratic processes** by establishing communication channels with diaspora communities around the world. Lobby international actors, such as governments and multilateral organizations, to pressure African governments to respect democratic norms. Raise awareness among the diaspora about the challenges to democracy in West Africa and mobilize their support for democratic initiatives.

E. Strategic Partners:

1. **Use diplomatic incentives to deter Member States from pursuing UCGs** by condemning unconstitutional actions by governments. Impose targeted sanctions, such as travel bans and asset freezes, on individuals and entities involved in UCGs. Suspend military cooperation or aid programs with governments that commit UCGs.

2. **Support regional initiatives and institutions that promote democracy and good governance** by providing financial and technical assistance to regional bodies like ECOWAS to strengthen their capacity to respond to UCGs. Support the work of AU-ECOSOCC and other regional civil society organizations that promote democratic values. Collaborate with regional leaders to develop a collective approach to preventing UCGs.

3. **Link and anchor development assistance to democratic reforms and respect for human rights including** electoral reforms, anti-corruption measures, and protection of human rights. Prioritize development assistance that strengthens democratic institutions and civil society organizations. Monitor the use of development assistance to ensure it is not used to support authoritarian regimes.

4. **Support initiatives that promote economic development, job creation, and poverty reduction** by investing in infrastructure development, education, and healthcare programs in West Africa. Support the development of the private sector and small and medium-sized enterprises. Promote economic diversification to reduce reliance on extractive industries.

5. **Share best practices and lessons learned from other regions on preventing UCGs** by organizing conferences and workshops to bring together experts from Africa and other regions to share experiences in preventing UCGs. Support research on the causes and consequences of UCGs and developing evidence-based strategies for prevention. Disseminate best practices through publications, online resources, and training programs.

6. **Partner with African institutions to develop context-specific solutions for democratic challenges** by working with African governments, civil society organizations, and research institutions to identify and address the specific challenges to democracy in each country. Support the development of national and regional action plans for preventing UCGs. Provide technical assistance to African institutions to implement effective democratic reforms.

7. **Support research and scholarship on democracy and conflict prevention in West Africa** by funding research grants and fellowships for African scholars to study democracy and conflict prevention. Support the development of research centers and universities focused on democracy and good governance in West Africa. Encourage collaboration between African and international researchers on issues related to UCGs and democratic consolidation.

2.4. Enhancing Civic Engagement and Building Trust for Democratic Governance.

A. Member States

1. **Enhance public consultations:** Organize town hall meetings, online surveys, and focus group discussions to gather citizen input on policy development. Establish youth advisory councils to provide perspectives on policies impacting young people. Develop national development plans with clear goals, timelines, and strategies for citizen participation in implementation and monitoring.

2. **Adopt open data platforms:** Create online platforms where citizens can easily access government data and budget information. Enact and enforce Right to Information laws that guarantee public access to government documents, subject to reasonable exceptions. Implement citizen report card mechanisms to allow citizens to evaluate the performance of government agencies.

3. **Invest in youth leadership programs:** Develop training programs to equip young people with leadership skills, critical thinking, and advocacy tools. Implement quotas for youth representation in government bodies and national assemblies. Integrate modules on democracy, human rights, and active citizenship into the primary and secondary school curriculum.

4. **Guarantee and create an enabling environment for credible and legitimate electoral processes:** Ensure electoral commissions are independent, impartial, and have adequate resources to conduct credible elections. Launch public education campaigns to inform citizens about their voting rights, registration procedures, and candidate platforms. Invite independent national and international observers to monitor elections and report on potential irregularities.

B. African Union

1. **Promote inclusive governance:** Develop and implement action plans to translate African Charter on Democracy, Elections, and Governance (ACDEG) principles into national strategies for inclusive governance. Strengthen the AU Peer Review Mechanism to hold member states accountable for upholding democratic standards and citizen participation. Deploy election observation missions to monitor elections in member states and provide recommendations for improvement.

2. **Build youth capacity:** Establish a Pan-African Youth Forum as a platform for young people to share ideas and collaborate on regional challenges. Connect experienced leaders with young people for mentorship and knowledge transfer in governance and leadership. Invest

in programs that equip young people with skills in communication, advocacy, and project management for civic participation.

3. **Strengthen regional cooperation:** Establish online platforms for sharing best practices on civic engagement strategies between CSOs, media, and religious institutions across Africa. Organize regional conferences to facilitate dialogue and knowledge exchange on promoting democratic practices and citizen participation. Launch joint advocacy campaigns by AU, regional bodies, and CSOs to address threats to democratic governance in the region.

C. ECOSOCC

1. **Strengthen civil society actors:** Organize regional dialogues for CSOs to engage with AU policymakers on policy issues and propose recommendations. Offer training workshops on advocacy skills, communication strategies, and resource mobilization for CSOs. Establish grant programs to support the work of CSOs promoting civic engagement and democratic accountability.

2. **Advocate for youth representation in AU-ECOSOCC structures:** Advocate for amendments to AU-ECOSOCC statutes to guarantee dedicated seats for youth representatives. Establish a Youth Advisory Council within AU-ECOSOCC to advise on youth-related issues and policy development. Create a virtual hub to connect youth-led CSOs working on democracy, human rights, and peacebuilding across Africa.

3. **Monitor democracy:** Develop annual reports that assess the state of democracy and citizen participation in AU member states. Establish an early warning system to identify potential threats to democracy and promote preventive diplomacy. Through Civil Society, strengthen AU's capacity for conflict resolution and mediation to address emerging crises before they escalate into violence.

D. Civil Society Organisations

1. **Organize community outreach programs:** Organize community outreach programs to educate citizens in rural areas about their rights and civic engagement. Utilize local languages, traditional communication channels, and community radio to reach diverse audiences. Partner with religious groups, traditional leaders, and women's groups to mobilize communities for civic participation.

2. **Promote transparency and accountability:** Establish hotlines where citizens can report corruption or abuse of power by government officials. Partner with journalists to conduct in-depth investigations into government corruption and human rights abuses. Utilize legal strategies to challenge government policies that violate citizen rights or democratic principles.

3. **Strengthen partnerships and collaboration:** Organize dialogues between religious leaders from different faiths to promote tolerance, peace, and civic engagement. Collaborate with businesses to support initiatives that promote corporate social responsibility and citizen participation in development projects. Build partnerships with

international NGOs and donors to leverage resources and expertise for capacity building and advocacy campaigns on a global scale.

E. Strategic Partners

1. **Support democratic reforms:** Provide technical assistance to member states in areas like electoral law reform, voter registration systems, and strengthening independent judiciaries. Design training programs for government officials on democratic governance, anti-corruption measures, and citizen participation. Tie development assistance to measurable progress on democratic reforms, human rights protection, and inclusive governance.

2. **Promote media freedom and independence :** Provide financial and technical assistance to independent media outlets to strengthen their investigative journalism capacity. Advocate for measures to protect journalists from harassment, intimidation, and violence. Partner with educational institutions to develop media literacy programs that equip citizens with skills to critically evaluate information sources.

3. **Counter misinformation and disinformation:** Provide funding and resources to independent fact-checking organizations to debunk misinformation and promote accurate information. Launch public awareness campaigns to educate citizens about the dangers of misinformation and how to identify fake news online. Organize dialogues between social media platforms, governments, and civil society to develop effective strategies to combat online hate speech and disinformation.

2.5. Towards a Coordinated and Coherent African Response on Illicit Financial   Flows, Corruption and Natural Resources Management

A. Member States

1. **Prioritize commercial IFFs:** Intensify efforts to target commercial activities as a primary source of illicit financial flows (IFFs). Actively implement recommendations from the African Union High-Level Panel (AU HLP) to disrupt commercial channels used for illicit financial transfers. Strengthen cross-border cooperation and intelligence sharing to dismantle commercial networks involved in IFFs.

2. **Ensure regional institutions accountability, integrity and transparency:** Proactively address administrative corruption within regional institutions like the African Development Bank (AfDB) and the African Union Commission (AUC). Implement robust anti-corruption measures, including independent audits and whistleblower protection policies. Foster a culture of transparency by mandating public disclosure of financial information and procurement processes. Empower civil society to hold regional institutions accountable for their actions.

3. **Generate more knowledge on mining sector challenges in support of the African Mining Vision (AMV):** Expedite research and data collection to identify key challenges hindering the implementation of the African Mining Vision (AMV). Invest in capacity building for mining sector stakeholders to enhance their ability to address these challenges. Collaborate with industry, government, and civil society to develop innovative solutions

for sustainable mining development. Prioritize the establishment of the African Mineral Development Center (AMDC) to serve as a knowledge hub for the sector.

4. **Scale up national actions:** Empower national governments to implement policies that encourage value addition to mineral and agricultural commodities. Provide financial incentives and technical assistance to support local processing and manufacturing industries. Diversify export baskets to reduce reliance on raw materials. Strengthen trade facilitation mechanisms to enhance the competitiveness of African products in global markets.

5. **Strengthen cross-border collaboration for asset recovery:** Enhance cooperation among member states in asset tracing, recovery, and repatriation. Establish efficient information-sharing platforms to facilitate cross-border investigations. Build the capacity of law enforcement and judicial institutions to conduct complex financial investigations. Implement international best practices in asset recovery and management. Advocate for mutual legal assistance treaties and extradition agreements to expedite the return of stolen assets.

6. **Strengthen peer learning and capacity building:** Promote knowledge exchange and capacity development among member states to enhance investigations into corruption, money laundering, and financial crimes. Establish regional training centers and mentorship programs to equip law enforcement and judicial officials with advanced investigative techniques, including financial analysis and asset tracing. Facilitate joint investigations and information sharing to dismantle transnational criminal networks involved in illicit financial flows. Prioritize capacity building in asset forfeiture procedures to ensure effective recovery of stolen assets.

B. The African Union

1. **Foster a coherent approach to addressing IFFS:** Strengthen coordination and collaboration among African Union (AU) member states, regional economic communities (RECs), and other relevant stakeholders to prevent and address IFFs. Develop a comprehensive implementation strategy for key AU decisions, including the African Mining Vision, the 2015 Assembly Special Declaration on IFFs, and the 2020 Common African Position on Asset Recovery (CAPAR). Establish a dedicated IFFs monitoring and evaluation framework to track progress and identify areas for improvement. Promote knowledge sharing and capacity building to enhance national and regional anti-corruption efforts.

2. **Address Resource gap for the African Union Advisory Board on Corruption (AUABC):** Increase financial and technical support to the AUABC to enable effective implementation of the AU Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption and CAPAR. Explore innovative financing mechanisms, such as public-private partnerships and international donor support, to augment the AUABC's resources. Strengthen the AUABC's technical capacity through staff recruitment, training, and partnerships with regional and international experts. Advocate for increased budgetary allocations for anti-corruption initiatives within the AU system.

C. **ECOSOCC and Civil Society Actors**

1. **Enhance national-level advocacy and mobilization: Position and strengthen the capacity of ECOSOCC to** lead a robust public awareness campaign on effects and impact of illicit financial flows (IFFs) on Africa. Mobilize a broad coalition of African civil society organizations (CSOs) to actively participate in the fight against IFFs. Provide capacity building and financial support to CSOs to strengthen their anti-corruption and illicit financial flows advocacy efforts. Facilitate knowledge sharing and networking among CSOs to amplify their collective voice.

2. **Champion good governance and accountability**: Demand greater accountability, transparency, and integrity from governments and international organizations. Conduct thorough investigations into the delays in operationalizing the African Integrity Fund and recommend corrective measures. Support initiatives that strengthen governance and anti-corruption frameworks at the national and regional levels. Promote citizen participation in governance processes to enhance oversight and accountability.

D. **Strategic Partners**

1. **Secure sustainable financing for addressing IFFs:** Mobilize adequate and predictable financial resources to support evidence-based research, advocacy, and capacity building in the fight against IFFs. Diversify funding sources to include government allocations, multilateral partnerships, and philanthropic contributions. Establish sustainable funding mechanisms, such as endowment funds or trust funds, to ensure the long-term financial viability of anti-IFFs initiatives. Prioritize support for African think tanks, research institutions, and civil society organizations to enhance their capacity to address IFFs challenges.

2. **Foster independent research and policy analysis**: Strengthen the capacity of African research institutions to conduct independent and rigorous studies on IFFs. Promote academic freedom and intellectual independence to ensure unbiased analysis and policy recommendations. Leverage existing African mechanisms, including the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), the African Union Advisory Board on Corruption (AUABC), the Committee of Experts on the Repatriation of Illicit Assets (CoDA)/AU HLP on IFFs secretariat, and the Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC) to support national-level responses to IFFs.

3. **Strengthen cooperation and coordination among key stakeholders involved in the fight against IFFs.** Explore the development of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the CoDA/AU HLP on IFFs secretariat and relevant partners to formalize collaboration and shared objectives. Facilitate knowledge sharing and joint initiatives among government agencies, civil society organizations, the private sector, and international partners.

4. **Optimize implementation of assessment tools:** Align the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) questionnaire and the AU HLP on IFFs recommendations to ensure a coherent and efficient assessment process. Develop clear guidelines and standardized methodologies for data collection and analysis. Strengthen monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to track progress and identify areas for improvement. Promote the use of technology to streamline data management and reporting.

2.6. Addressing the Impact of Technology on Democracy and Health Resilience in Africa.

A. Member States

1. **Adopt a rights-based approach to the inclusion of technology in democratic governance**: Underpin the incorporation of technological advancements to governance processes with safeguards that guarantee the promotion and protection of human and peoples' rights such as the freedom of expression, the right to equality and non-discrimination, the freedom of assembly, the right to privacy and the right to life.

2. **Bridge the digital divide to ensure inclusive digital governance**: Implement policies and work with the private sector to ensure access to affordable internet and related technologies such as telecommunication devices, in order to ensure that no segment of the public is left behind either in terms of service delivery or public participation.

3. **Centralize Data Management**: Africa CDC to support AU Member states to establish robust data governance frameworks to ensure ethical and effective management of health data. Prioritize data quality, security, and privacy. Generate region-specific datasets to inform AI model development and deployment.

4. **Commit to compliance with African normative instruments that strengthen digital governance and innovation**: Institute peer accountability at state level for the universal ratification and implementation of critical instruments such as the ACDEG and the African Union Convention on Cyber Security and Personal Data Protection. Additionally, incorporate into domestic policy, the Continental Artificial Intelligence (AI) Strategy and African Digital Compact and the Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa.

5. **Support and create an enabling environment for citizen-led innovations as part of participatory governance**: Provide financial and regulatory incentives that catalyze the development of civic technology tools that enable public participation, transparency and accountability in matters of governance. Ensure that regulatory frameworks on the issues of data protection, access to information and cyber misuse are not interpreted in a manner that curtails civic space or inhibits innovation in this area.

6. **Catalyze Private Sector Investment in strengthening Africa's Health system.** Africa CDC to support AU Member states to develop a comprehensive investment case for private sector financing of Africa's public health infrastructure. This will include support by Africa CDC to member states in creating an enabling environment for private sector participation through policy reforms and incentives.

7. **Strengthen Primary Healthcare Delivery: Africa CDC to support Member States** in building a resilient primary healthcare system capable of delivering essential services to the population. This will include optimizing the use of existing health infrastructure and human resources to improve access and quality of care.

8. **Ensure sustainable financing for universal health coverage (UHC)**: Allocate adequate and sustainable resources to achieve UHC. Diversify funding sources to reduce reliance on external aid. Strengthen domestic resource mobilization through tax reforms and efficient revenue collection. Optimize the use of available resources to maximize impact.

9. **Bridge critical infrastructure gaps**: Invest in developing essential infrastructure, including energy, connectivity, and digital technologies, to support the health sector. Prioritize rural and underserved areas to reduce health disparities. Leverage digital health solutions to improve service delivery, data management, and decision-making.

10. **Digital Health Workforce Development.** Africa CDC to train 5,000 Health Systems Leaders and 120,000 Health and IT professionals in AU Member states. This investment in human capital will equip workforce with the necessary skills to utilize and manage digital health tools effectively as part of overall primary health care systems strengthening.

11. **HealthTech Homegrown Innovation.** Africa CDC to promote AI-driven innovation, data governance, and interoperability to foster homegrown technological solutions in AU member states. This will be undertaken through supporting local innovators and startups with the aim to create a robust ecosystem that can develop and implement cutting-edge health technologies tailored to Africa's primary health care needs.

12. **Establish robust data governance frameworks to ensure ethical and effective management of health data**. Prioritize data quality, security, and privacy. Generate region-specific datasets to inform AI model development and deployment.

13. **Drive inclusive AI adoption**: Develop strategies to address digital divides and ensure equitable access to AI-powered healthcare services. Prioritize the needs of marginalized populations, including women, children, and rural communities, in AI development and deployment.

14. **Integrate AI into education**: Incorporate AI concepts and skills into medical curricula to cultivate a future-ready healthcare workforce. Deliver targeted AI training programs for young people to inspire innovation. This includes empowering healthcare professionals and technologists with AI knowledge through comprehensive training programs. Cultivate a data-driven culture to optimize AI tool utilization.

15. **Accelerate AI research and innovation**: Support research collaborations between academia, industry, and government to advance AI applications in healthcare. Create incentives for AI innovation, particularly among women-led startups. Foster a thriving AI ecosystem through talent development and knowledge sharing.

16. **Forge a supportive AI ecosystem**: Develop clear and comprehensive AI regulations that balance innovation and patient safety. Establish interoperability standards to facilitate data exchange and integration. Build trust and confidence in AI technologies through transparency and accountability. This also entails investing in the development of robust IT infrastructure to support the seamless deployment and scaling of AI solutions. Ensure data security, privacy, and interoperability to facilitate AI integration.

B. **The African Union**

1. **Strengthen state compliance and boost transparency on digital governance and innovation**: Through the African Governance Platform, ensure that states comply with the relevant normative frameworks pertaining to digital governance and innovation by

establishing a harmonized and coherent reporting framework that aligns state reporting obligations on democratic governance and human and peoples' rights.

2. **Primary Health Care Digitization.** Africa CDC to connect two million Community Health Workers and 100,000 Health Centers by 2030 as part of primary health care digitalization. This will be done through leveraging digital technologies to enhance the efficiency and reach of primary healthcare services across the continent, ensuring that even the most remote communities have access to quality care.

3. **Data Sharing Agreement:** Africa CDC to facilitate easy access to critical information by establishing a continental framework for data sharing; and improving data quality; developing interchangeable data elements that prepare countries to respond to disease threats, emergencies and pandemics; and timely disseminating critical information to Member States.

4. **Provide multi-stakeholder platforms to strengthen collaboration in digital governance and innovation**: Facilitate continental dialogues and engagements that bring together member states, civil society and the private sector, with the aim of fostering collaboration that institute approaches to digital governance and innovation which advance public participation and responsive decision making. Actively engage diverse stakeholders in co-creating AI solutions that address real-world community challenges. Build strong partnerships to ensure alignment with local needs and priorities.

5. **Support citizen-led innovation**: Undertake programmes that enhance digital literacy and upscale programmes such as the AU Civic Tech Fund which provide support to citizen developed technology tools that aid in citizen engagement with governance processes.

6. **Generate and utilize region-specific data for AI Advancement**: Invest in data collection, management, and analysis to build a robust data infrastructure for AI development. Develop data sharing platforms and standards to facilitate data accessibility and utilization. Prioritize data privacy and security to protect sensitive patient information. Support research and innovation in AI algorithms and models tailored to African contexts.

7. **Foster knowledge sharing and peer learning**: Africa CDC to establish a platform for countries to exchange experiences, lessons learned, and best practices in healthcare delivery. Facilitate peer-to-peer learning and mentorship programs to strengthen national health systems. Promote South-South cooperation to share knowledge and resources among African countries. Develop performance indicators and accountability mechanisms to track progress and identify areas for improvement.

8. **Develop a robust regulatory framework for AI in healthcare**: Africa CDC to support member states in creating a supportive regulatory environment for AI innovation while ensuring patient safety and data privacy. This will include establishing a monitoring and evaluation system to assess the impact of AI on healthcare outcomes in Africa.

C. **ECOSOCC**

1. **Establish a thematic cluster on digital governance**: This should institutionalize digital governance as a policy priority and enable ECOSOCC to convene civil society around

contemporary concerns in this area and mandate them to develop and issue relevant advisories to the wider AU and member states.

2. **Resource Mobilization**: Joint efforts between AU ECOSOCC and Africa CDC to enhance resource mobilization for public health initiatives through aligning their efforts to attract funding and support from international partners and donors, thereby strengthening Africa's health systems.

3. **Leveraging technology**: Africa CDC to partner with ECOSOCC on enhancing the maturity of the African digital enabling environment by strengthening governance and fostering trust among stakeholders, including civil society organizations.

4. **Embrace digital platforms and other forms of technology to enrich existing citizen engagement strategies**: Utilize digital technologies to enhance processes such as knowledge dissemination, targeted messaging and establishing feedback loops that make policy making processes in the AU more interactive and responsive.

5. **Conduct Comprehensive Data Assessment:** Africa CDC to work with AU ECOSOCC in conducting a rigorous evaluation of existing data collection systems and processes to identify gaps, inconsistencies, and redundancies. Assess the quality, relevance, and accessibility of data for decision-making. Develop strategies to improve data collection efficiency and effectiveness.

6. **Policy Advocacy and Awareness**: AU ECOSOCC and Africa CDC to collaborate by raising awareness about the public health initiatives and policies spearheaded by Africa CDC. This is to ensure communities are well-informed and actively participate in health promotion and disease prevention measures.

7. **Advocate for Robust Infrastructure Investment**: Champion investments in critical infrastructure, including data centers and high-speed networks, to support AI development and deployment. Promote public-private partnerships to accelerate infrastructure development.

8. **Foster Knowledge Sharing, Collaboration**: Organize platforms for peer-to-peer learning and exchange among civil society organizations (CSOs) to share best practices and innovative approaches to accountability. Facilitate cross-border collaboration to strengthen CSO capacity and impact.

9. **Feedback Mechanism**: AU ECOSOCC to provide feedback to Africa CDC on the effectiveness of its programs and policies through leveraging its advisory and monitoring functions.

D. Civil Society Organisations

1. **Support citizens to exercise their agency in digital governance**: Spearhead efforts to provide digital literacy and undertake projects that provide ease of access to digital tools for different segments of the society with an emphasis on affordability, simplicity and responsiveness.

2. **Collaborate and co-create technology-based initiatives for citizen engagement**: Develop and widely disseminate open source civic technology tools that you can share with each other for adaptable use in different contexts as well as enable co-creations and modifications that expand the digital tools available for citizen engagement. Establish a Pan-African community of practice that facilitates such collaboration and co-creation.

3. **Provide public oversight in relation to digital governance and innovation**: Monitor government initiatives as well as state policies on digital governance and innovation with a view to identifying emerging challenges, recommending appropriate solutions and pursuing remedies for any violations of human and peoples' rights that may occur.

4. **Foster community-driven accountability in health**: Empower communities to participate in health decision-making and monitoring. Strengthen community health worker programs to enhance accountability at the grassroots level. Implement mechanisms for community feedback and response to health service delivery.

5. **Community Engagement:** Africa CDC working through its Regional Coordinating Centers to leverage the AU ECOSOCC civil society partners to mobilize communities for public health interventions to accelerate vaccination uptake, health education campaigns and emergency responses to outbreaks.

6. **Promote localization in health systems**: Adapt global health best practices to local contexts. Prioritize the use of locally available resources and expertise. Strengthen partnerships between national and local stakeholders to drive localization efforts.

7. **Advocate for ethical and equitable AI in Healthcare**: Develop and implement ethical guidelines for the development and use of AI in healthcare. Ensure AI systems are inclusive and address the needs of marginalized populations. Promote transparency and accountability in AI decision-making. Build capacity to assess the ethical implications of AI applications.

8. **Advocate for investment in critical infrastructure**: Advocate for substantial investments in foundational infrastructure, including robust data centers and high-speed networks, to create a conducive environment for AI development and deployment across key sectors.

9. **Capacity Building**: Africa CDC and AU ECOSOCC to work on a detailed plan to facilitate capacity-building initiatives for CSOs in health-related fields. The plan should include strategies to empowers civil society to contribute more effectively to health governance and service delivery.

E. **Strategic Partners**

1. **Provide holistic support to digital governance and innovation efforts:** Partner with state and non-state actors to institute digital technology programmes that are responsive to citizen needs and support innovations which elevate citizen engagement and public participation. Partner with African states to ensure multinational corporations operating on the continent remain accountable and fair in their engagements on the continent, help safeguard the intellectual property of African innovators and advocate for the infusion of

democratic governance priorities such as public participation within the support offered to Africa's Digital Transformation Strategy.

2. **Provide strategic support for AI-driven community solutions**: Offer technical assistance and capacity building to government agencies and other stakeholders in developing and implementing AI-based interventions that address community needs. Facilitate partnerships between technology providers, researchers, and policymakers to co-create innovative solutions. Evaluate the impact of AI solutions on communities and make necessary adjustments.

3. **Develop user-centric AI solutions**: Africa CDC to prioritize the creation of AI tools and products that are essential for healthcare workers to effectively deliver care. Africa CDC to conduct thorough user research to understand the specific needs and preferences of end-users, and design solutions that address these requirements.

PARTNERS & SUPPORTERS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

African Union Commission
Common Market for Eastern and Southern African
Delegation of the European Union to the African Union

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