The African Union Commission – Department for Political Affairs, Peace and Security - presents its compliments to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and to all Embassies of the African Union Member States in Ethiopia, Permanent Missions to the African Union in Addis Ababa, and has the honor to inform the latter that the 2022 African Decentralisation Day (ADD) will be celebrated at national level on 10 August 2022 under the theme: “Making food security a key priority for the territorial development and cooperation”.

This theme is inspiring from AU Agenda 2063 and the decision of the African Union Heads of State and government declaring 2022 as the year on “Building Resilience in Nutrition on the African Continent: Accelerate the Human Capital, Social and Economic Development”.

Please find hereto attached the concept note related to the 2022 ADD theme and sub themes.

The African Union Commission – Department for Political Affairs, Peace, and Security - avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and to all Embassies of the African Union Member States in Ethiopia, Permanent Missions to the African Union in Addis Ababa, assurances of its highest consideration.

Addis Ababa, 21 July 2022

- Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
- All Embassies of African Union Member States, Permanent Missions to the African Union
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.
CONCEPT NOTE
THE THEME AND SUB-THEMES FOR THE
AFRICAN DECENTRALIZATION AND LOCAL DEVELOPMENT DAY (ADD)
2022 edition

THEME:
MAKING FOOD SECURITY A KEY PRIORITY FOR THE TERRITORIAL
DEVELOPMENT AND COOPERATION

10 August 2022
( in All AU member states )

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL AFFAIRS, PEACE, AND
SECURITY- AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION - (CUA),
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA
INTRODUCTION

1. The 2022 edition of the African Decentralization and Local Development Day will be celebrated on 10 August 2022 in all AU Member States. The focus of the ADD theme is to dedicate the year to strengthening the fight against malnutrition in all its forms, drawing on the potential of its populations. Multiple factors including land and crop degradation, periodic droughts and weather-related shocks, poverty, limited access to basic food staples and essential services, and population growth, contribute to emergency levels of malnutrition in Africa. Malnutrition is not only about lack of food; a combination of other causes lead to malnutrition in children, including diet at home, illnesses such as malaria and water-borne diseases, limited access to clean water and sanitation infrastructure, and knowledge about safe hygiene practices, lack of access to health services, and inadequate child feeding practices.

2. Local government has a critical role to play in fighting malnutrition in Africa. Urban food security is an increasingly urgent priority in the face of climate change, rising food prices and growing urban populations. Most at risk are residents of low-income settlements within low- and middle-income countries. Increasing food production within urban areas has limited potential, but urban planning can play a major role by providing effective transport links, food storage facilities, adequate water and sanitation infrastructure and waste management. Local governments’ support to community-led initiatives to improve food access and safety can greatly reduce food insecurity and contribute to greater resilience to the impacts of climate change.

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

3. The African Charter of Values and Principles of Decentralization, Local Governance and Local Development, adopted in June 2014 by the Heads of State and Government meeting at their Summit in Malabo instituted the commemoration of the African Decentralization and Local Development Day (ADD) on 10 August each year. The 2021 ADD was celebrated under the theme: "The contribution of arts, culture and heritage in the sustainable development of African cities and territories". The add is an entrenched strategic programme on the African Union (AU) calendar, and part of collaborative work of the African Decentralization and Local Development Ministers programme aimed at enhancing local government and urban development across the continent. The ADD event provides member states with the opportunity for benchmarking, and cross-pollination of service delivery improvement ideas, best practices and innovation in local government and urban cities service delivery.

4. By declaring 2022 the Year of "Building Resilience in Nutrition and Food Security on the African Continent: Strengthening Agri-Food, Health and Social Protection Systems for Accelerated Human, Social and Economic Capital", the Africa Union wishes that member states recognize the need for continued efforts including, advocacy, especially in the regions and communities where risks are most acute,
strengthening social protection systems and safeguarding access to food and nutrition for the most vulnerable groups, especially young children, pregnant and breastfeeding women, older people and other at-risk groups. It is vital that these gains are protected by increased and well-targeted official development assistance, but above all by an increase in allocations of national resources that are focused on the nutritional well-being of populations, including the most vulnerable ones. The 2022 theme of the year will be a good opportunity for continued advocacy to ensure gains made over the years in eliminating malnutrition and all its forms are not reversed. The theme of year will also be a great opportunity to advocate for adequate financing, implementation capacity and coordination to enhance the quality of collaboration possible for effective implementation.

OBJECTIVES OF THE AFRICAN DECENTRALIZATION AND LOCAL DEVELOPMENT DAY (ADD)

5. The key objective of the 2022 ADD Edition is to avail a platform for African Union member states to dialogue and discourse on the successes and challenges of service delivery at local government and urban development level and exchange best practice on how to strategize and implement programmes and measures to ensure food security is realised. Specific objectives are:

a) Share and exchange best practices of how to be organizing territorial development and cooperation for food security measures and intervention towards the realization of the goals of Agenda 2063
b) sensitize citizens and corporates of Africa on the role they should play as strategic partner to achieve food security at local government and urban environment
c) Explore ways and means to support women initiatives in food production and fighting malnutrition especially in urban centres
d) Discuss the prevalence of undernourishment and net dependence on imports as the two indicators of hunger and food security in local government
e) To analyse whether Africa is on track to eliminate hunger and food insecurity by 2025
f) Propose ways to enhance food production in local government and urban areas to realize food security.

JUSTIFICATION FOR THE THEME AND SUB-THEMES

6. As it is an established tradition that the theme of the African Decentralization Day is aligned with the African Union’s theme of the year, which for 2022, is: “Building Resilience in Nutrition and Food Security on the African Continent: Strengthening Agri-Food, Health and Social Protection Systems for Accelerated Human, Social and Economic Capital”. The rationale for this theme is premised on AU’s aspirations as stipulated in Agenda 2063. The African Union has set a target to eliminate hunger and food insecurity by 2025. Both Agenda 2063 and the African Union Summit decision on Accelerated Agricultural Growth and Transformation
have reaffirmed this commitment. Unfortunately, Africa is not currently on track to meet these targets. Immediate, mutually reinforcing interventions are required especially at local government and urban development level to bring the continent closer to eliminating hunger and food insecurity.

7. With the majority of the world’s population now living in urban areas, food insecurity has become a primarily urban challenge for local government. Poverty is the major cause of urban food insecurity, as urban residents rely on buying, rather than producing, food. Low-income groups are especially vulnerable to increasing food prices, as has been seen dramatically during the onset of the Covid pandemic and since the Ukrainian – Russia conflict. Appropriate urban planning in rapidly growing cities in low- and middle-income countries is crucial to reducing food insecurity for low-income groups. Urban food security is a major challenge that requires action at all levels – global, national, and local.

8. As long as policy debates continue to focus only on production, however, the role local governments can play will remain limited. Yet the priorities of the residents of low-income settlements highlight the importance of urban planning and infrastructure in ensuring access to safe food and suggest a number of ways for local governments to act on the urban space. Given the key role local government and cities can and should play in building resilience in food security, the proposed theme for the 2022 ADD edition is: “Making food security a key priority for the territorial development and cooperation”. The sub-theme that should flow from this theme are:
   a) Subtheme 1: “Women’s role in local food systems”.
   b) Subtheme 2: “Managing the nexus of food security-nutrition-health in sub national and local government in Africa”.

STRATEGY AND FORMAT OF THE 2022 NATIONAL ADD CELEBRATIONS

9. The main strategy of the 2022 edition of the ADD is to recognize local government and urban development experiences in dealing with issues of food security and showcase best practice interventions as well as identifying challenges and prospects for improving food security levers across the continent. A week of relevant and coordinated activities is envisaged at the country level which will culminate on 10th August with formal celebrations by the Ministries responsible for Decentralization and local development and their respective civil and related public sector organs. The ADD Events will be guided by the common AU theme and a formal message from the AU Commissioner for Political Affairs. Whilst Member States are free to adopt different formats for their own national activities and events the common ADD theme should be respected, and it is hoped that the different sub-regions will coordinate and synchronize their activities to optimize regional synergy and impact.

10. A call is made to African Union Member States to preface the Continental 10TH August celebrations with a weeklong buildup of coordinated national activities that will attract and engage not just government ministries and departments, or regional
and local government agencies but as much as possible should facilitate the full involvement of institutions like universities, technikons, umbrella private sector organizations, parastatals, telecoms, and multi-purpose community centres and of course, the media. These platforms will also prove useful to stimulate and inform public debate and discussion on repositioning decentralization and local development as an anchor for ethical, professional, performance culture, strategic management, public accountability, transparency, social responsibility, and good governance, and equally identify common challenges and approaches to better serve the public within national, continental and global contexts.

CONTACT DETAILS

African Union Commission

Mr. Issaka Garba Abdou,
Ag. (a.i) Governance and Human Rights Division/
Coordinator, STC 8 Secretariat
E-mail GarbaAbdou@africa-union.org, Tel: +251936543649
Cc: HiwotD@africa-union.org, Kevint@africa- union.org