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| UNIÓN AFRICANA                                                                                    |                                                                                   | UMOJA WA AFRIKA |
| AFRICAN COURT ON HUMAN AND PEOPLES' RIGHTS<br>COUR AFRICAINE DES DROITS DE L'HOMME ET DES PEUPLES |                                                                                   |                 |

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

## AFRICAN COURT ON HUMAN AND PEOPLES' RIGHTS

### STRATEGIC PLAN

2026-2028

*“Protecting Human Rights in Africa: A Shared Responsibility”*

## FOREWORD BY THE PRESIDENT

The protection of human rights in Africa is not a task that any single institution can achieve in isolation. While the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights is entrusted with the overall continental mandate of judicial oversight, the ultimate success of our mission depends on the strength of our partnerships. As we launch this Strategic Plan for the 2026–2028 period, we do so under the theme *Protecting Human Rights in Africa: A Shared Responsibility*, signalling a new era of collaborative justice and continental impact.

Over the past five years, the Court has focused inward to refine its procedures and enhance its technical efficiency. Having established this robust foundation, we are now turning our energy outward. Our goal for this strategic cycle is to ensure that the rule of law is not merely a concept discussed in our courtroom in Arusha, but a living reality that inspires confidence and provides an opportunity for redress for every African citizen.

We recognize that for our judgments to have a transformative impact, they must be embraced and implemented at the national level. This requires a profound commitment from Member States, a continuous dialogue with national judiciaries and a vibrant partnership with civil society. Through this Plan, we invite all stakeholders to act as co-guarantors of justice. We are specifically prioritizing the reversal of jurisdictional contraction, seeking to restore and expand direct access to the Court for individuals and NGOs, while simultaneously humanizing our jurisprudence to connect our legal reasoning with the human stories of those we serve.

This Strategic Plan is also our contribution to the broader aspirations of the African Union. By providing legal certainty and holding our institutions to the highest standards of accountability, the Court serves as a vital pillar for the realization of Agenda 2063. We remain dedicated to fostering a continental legal environment where human rights are respected, protected and fulfilled as a cornerstone of sustainable peace and development.

Justice is not static, it is a dynamic process and a shared journey. I call upon our Member States, our partner institutions and the people of Africa to join us in this collective effort to ensure that the African human rights system remains a beacon of hope and a source of pride for our continent.

**Hon. Justice Blaise Tchikaya**

President of the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights

## FOREWORD BY THE REGISTRAR

The operational success of an international judicial body is built on a foundation of rigorous administrative discipline, transparency and data-driven management. As we transition into this new strategic planning cycle (2026–2028), our focus within the Registry is to ensure that the African Court has the internal resilience and technical sophistication required to meet the high expectations of the continent.

This Strategic Plan is grounded in a thorough empirical assessment of our previous performance. We have utilized the data from our 2021–2025 implementation review to identify exactly where our systems must be optimized. In response, we are further enhancing the results-based culture that moves beyond tracking activities to measuring real-world outcomes. Our management approach for the next three years is defined by a commitment to continuous improvement—ensuring that cases are disposed of timeously and the quality of our judicial outputs increases.

As part of its broader administrative evolution, the Registry will continue to pursue a gradual and pragmatic digital transformation aimed at enhancing efficiency, institutional memory, and judicial administration. In this regard, the Court is exploring the progressive integration of the African Jurisprudence Database (AJUDATA) and strengthening the existing electronic case management systems already operational within the Registry. Given that AJUDATA remains under pilot implementation and continues to evolve, the focus at this stage is on ensuring complementarity, interoperability, and the seamless exchange of information between platforms. Through these ongoing improvements, the Registry seeks to enhance monitoring of the Court's docket and the implementation of its decisions, while remaining responsive to the technological demands and innovations of the 21st century.

However, technical systems are only as effective as the people who manage them. We are therefore prioritizing workforce stabilization, focusing on the professional development, security and total well-being of our staff. By adopting a "Healthy African Court Family" approach, we ensure that our team has the optimal environment to deliver excellence and the creative space to foster institutional innovation.

We are also committed to a new standard of institutional accountability. By enhancing the substantive content and analytical depth of the statutory Annual Activity Report, we will provide our stakeholders and the African Union Policy Organs with clear, evidence-based data on our efficiency and impact. This transparency is the cornerstone of our value proposition.

The Registry stands ready to translate the strategic vision of this Plan into a daily operational reality. We remain dedicated to providing the high-level legal and administrative support necessary to ensure that the African Court continues to innovate its processes and inspire justice across the continent.

**Dr. Robert Eno**

Registrar of the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights has moved beyond its foundational phase and is now focused on ensuring that its judicial work creates a lasting, visible difference for the people of Africa. This Strategic Plan (2026–2028) represents an institutional shift from building procedures to delivering results, ensuring that every judgment issued and every policy adopted contributes to a tangible improvement in the protection of rights across the continent. Under the theme *Protecting Human Rights in Africa: A Shared Responsibility*, the Court recognizes that justice is a collective endeavour that requires the active participation of Member States, national judiciaries and the broader continental human rights architecture, including academia, non-governmental organizations, the media, bar associations and law societies.

## INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHENING AND PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT

2. This three-year plan serves as a critical bridge, synchronizing the Court's judicial mandate with the wider aspirations of the African Union. Having spent the previous cycle refining its internal processes under the theme "*Deepening trust in the African Court by enhancing its efficiency and effectiveness*", the Court is now focusing its energy on the real-world resonance of its work while laying the groundwork for future institutional innovation.
3. By adopting a model of continuous improvement, the institution has refined its performance framework to focus on measurable and attainable judicial outputs. Building on the 2025 baseline of at least twenty finalized cases per year, the Court aims to incrementally increase the number of cases finalized annually by two additional cases each year. This approach provides a clear and predictable benchmark for assessing institutional performance while relying on factors that are within the Court's operational capacity and control.
4. With regard to the implementation of judgments, the Court recognizes that the execution of its decisions ultimately depends on the cooperation and actions of States Parties and other stakeholders, factors that fall outside the direct control of the institution. Consequently, rather than setting targets based on percentages of implementation of judgments achieved, the Court's performance framework will focus on strengthening measures within its mandate aimed at promoting and facilitating implementation. These include enhancing follow-up mechanisms, improving reporting and monitoring processes, increasing engagement with relevant stakeholders, and expanding awareness and dissemination of the Court's decisions. This approach enables the institution to assess performance based on concrete actions within its operational control while continuing to support improved compliance with its judgments.

## THREE PILLARS OF IMPACT

5. The strategy is organized around three substantive pillars designed to deliver a more responsive and influential judicial system:

- i. **Judicial Impact:** The Court will continue to strengthen its judicial performance through a measurable increase in the number of cases finalized annually, while pursuing improvements in the efficiency and management of judicial processes. In this regard, the Court will pursue resources for filling vacancies, continue to enhance its existing case management mechanisms and progressively integrate the African Jurisprudence Database (AJUDATA), in a manner that ensures complementarity and interoperability with systems already in place. As AJUDATA remains under progressive development and pilot implementation, its role will be to support improved access to jurisprudence, institutional memory and knowledge management, while contributing to the modernization of the Court's working methods. Through these measures, the Court seeks to reinforce the quality, consistency and accessibility of its judicial work and the effective delivery of remedies to victims of human rights violations.
- ii. **Continental Cooperation:** Central to this plan is a high-level judicial diplomacy initiative to reverse jurisdictional contraction and restore direct access for individuals and NGOs. The Court will move beyond general awareness-raising to humanize its jurisprudence, sharing the stories of those who have received redress and fostering deeper technical alliances with national courts and human rights institutions.
- iii. **Institutional Resilience and Sustainability:** To ensure the continuity and effectiveness of its operations, the Court will focus on the engagement, development and flourishing of its staff, while pursuing sustained engagement with the Host State and relevant stakeholders regarding the completion of its permanent premises. This strategic direction is supported by the adoption of sound financial management practices, the diversification of partnerships and the modernization of technological infrastructure to safeguard the institution against external shocks.

## ACCOUNTABILITY AND PERFORMANCE

6. The Court is institutionalizing a new standard of transparency. By evolving the substantive framework of its statutory Annual Activity Report into a results-based assessment tool, the Court will provide stakeholders with data driven evidence of its contribution to continental integration and the rule of law. This ensures that the Court's value proposition is clearly visible to AU Policy Organs and that its strategic direction remains agile, responsive and ready to innovate alongside the evolving legal landscape of the continent.
7. Ultimately, this Strategic Plan is an invitation to all stakeholders to share in the responsibility of justice, ensuring that the African human rights system remains a vibrant, effective and respected pillar of the continent's transformation.

## ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

|                 |                                                                     |
|-----------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>ABB:</b>     | Activity Based Budgeting                                            |
| <b>ACDEG:</b>   | African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance              |
| <b>ACERWC:</b>  | African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child |
| <b>ACHPR:</b>   | African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights                     |
| <b>ACODO:</b>   | African Court Documentation System                                  |
| <b>AfCHPR:</b>  | African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights                          |
| <b>AfCFTA:</b>  | African Continental Free Trade Area                                 |
| <b>AGA:</b>     | African Governance Architecture                                     |
| <b>AJN:</b>     | African Judicial Network                                            |
| <b>AJTN:</b>    | African Judicial Training Network                                   |
| <b>AJUDATA:</b> | African Jurisprudence Database                                      |
| <b>AMERT:</b>   | African Union Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting Tool             |
| <b>APSA:</b>    | African Peace and Security Architecture                             |
| <b>AU:</b>      | African Union                                                       |
| <b>AUABC:</b>   | African Union Advisory Board on Corruption                          |
| <b>AUC:</b>     | African Union Commission                                            |
| <b>AUCIL:</b>   | African Union Commission on International Law                       |
| <b>CSO:</b>     | Civil Society Organization                                          |
| <b>DTS:</b>     | Digital Transformation Strategy                                     |
| <b>EALS:</b>    | East Africa Law Society                                             |
| <b>ECtHR:</b>   | European Court of Human Rights                                      |
| <b>EHMS:</b>    | Electronic Health Care Management System                            |
| <b>ELA:</b>     | Electronic Library of the African Court                             |
| <b>IACtHR:</b>  | Inter-American Court of Human Rights                                |
| <b>ICJ:</b>     | International Court of Justice                                      |
| <b>IIA:</b>     | Inter-Institutional Agreement                                       |
| <b>ILC:</b>     | International Law Commission                                        |
| <b>JR:</b>      | Judge-Rapporteur                                                    |
| <b>KMS:</b>     | Knowledge Management System                                         |
| <b>LIFO:</b>    | Last-In, First-Out                                                  |
| <b>MBRS:</b>    | Management Business Reporting System                                |
| <b>MEAL:</b>    | Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning                 |
| <b>MoU:</b>     | Memorandum of Understanding                                         |
| <b>NANHRI:</b>  | Network of African National Human Rights Institutions               |
| <b>NCD:</b>     | Non-communicable Disease                                            |
| <b>NHRI:</b>    | National Human Rights Institution                                   |
| <b>PALU:</b>    | Pan African Lawyers Union                                           |
| <b>PAP:</b>     | Pan-African Parliament                                              |
| <b>PAPS:</b>    | Political Affairs, Peace and Security                               |
| <b>PRC:</b>     | Permanent Representatives Committee                                 |
| <b>PTSU:</b>    | Procurement, Travel and Stores Unit                                 |
| <b>RBM:</b>     | Results-based Management                                            |
| <b>SAP:</b>     | Systems, Applications, and Products (Data Processing)               |
| <b>SIDAC:</b>   | Status of Implementation of Decisions of the African Court          |
| <b>SOP:</b>     | Standard Operating Procedure                                        |
| <b>SSU:</b>     | Security and Safety Unit                                            |
| <b>STC:</b>     | Specialized Technical Committee                                     |
| <b>UN:</b>      | United Nations                                                      |

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 NEW VISION, MISSION, CORE VALUES, STRATEGIC PLAN THEME

1. The 2026–2028 Strategic Plan is anchored in a renewed institutional identity that redefines the African Court’s vision, mission and core values. Initiated in anticipation of the 20th anniversary of the operationalization of the Court, this updated framework is the product of an extensive consultative process designed to ensure Pan-African ownership and alignment with Agenda 2063. The methodology blended wide-ranging external stakeholder feedback—gathered via a comprehensive survey disseminated in six African Union working languages—with rigorous internal reflections led by the Registry, the Strategic Planning Committee and the Plenary of Judges. These refined foundational statements reflect the Court’s evolution toward a more impactful and collaborative role within the African human rights system, providing the mandate for all current and future operational activities.

### 1.1.1 New Vision Statement

*An African Court that protects human and peoples’ rights, strengthens the rule of law and inspires justice.*

### 1.1.2 New Mission Statement

*To safeguard human and peoples’ rights through accessible, innovative and enforceable judicial mechanisms that complement national and regional systems.*

### 1.1.3 New Core Values

1. **People-Centered Justice** – Responding to the needs, realities and aspirations of those whose rights are at stake.
2. **Commitment to Compliance and Impact** – Ensuring that judgments lead to real change and sustainable human rights progress.
3. **Judicial Independence and Impartiality** – Upholding fairness, objectivity and autonomy in all decisions and processes.
4. **Integrity and Accountability** – Maintaining transparency, ethical conduct, professionalism and responsibility in every aspect of the Court’s work.
5. **Accessibility and Inclusivity** – Ensuring that all individuals, regardless of status, gender or geographical location, can access the Court’s protection.
6. **Efficiency and Innovation** – Leveraging technology and best practices to deliver timely, effective and user-friendly justice.
7. **Collaboration and Partnership** – Working with states, institutions and civil society to strengthen human rights protection and enforcement.
8. **Respect for Diversity and Non-Discrimination** – Promoting equality and recognizing Africa’s social, cultural and linguistic diversity.

#### 1.1.4 New Strategic Plan Theme

2. The theme of the 2026–2028 Strategic Plan, “*Protecting Human Rights in Africa: A Shared Responsibility*,” represents the purposeful evolution of the Court’s institutional trajectory. Having dedicated the 2021–2025 period to a rigorous exercise in deepening trust in the African Court by enhancing its efficiency and effectiveness, it is now well-positioned to utilize that foundation to strengthen its relationships and cooperation across the continent towards impactful justice.
3. This theme is rooted in the recognition that the Court does not operate in a vacuum. While judicial authority is the Court’s primary instrument, real and lasting impact on the lives of African citizens can only be achieved through collective action. Shared responsibility is therefore not a reduction of the Court’s mandate but an expansion of its effectiveness through collaboration.
4. This narrative is operationalized through three core dimensions:
  - i. **Deepening Cooperation through Established Trust:** Building on the credibility gained during the previous strategic cycle, the Court will further integrate its work with key human rights stakeholders, including national judiciaries, African Governance Architecture-African Peace and Security Architecture Platform (AGA-APSA Platform) Members, civil society, state institutions and international partners. This cooperative approach ensures that the continental human rights architecture functions as a unified and supportive system.
  - ii. **Impact through Collective Participation:** The Court recognizes that for judicial decisions to translate into tangible change, they must be understood and embraced by a wide range of stakeholders. By fostering greater dialogue with member states, civil society and the citizenry, the Court ensures that its work remains responsive to the needs of the people it serves.
  - iii. **Mutual Commitment to Results:** Shared responsibility implies a mutual commitment to the implementation of decisions. The Court will focus on developing the tools and reporting frameworks necessary for all partners to contribute to the realization of human rights progress, ensuring that justice is not only delivered but also enforced.
5. By adopting this theme, the Court acknowledges that working together is the only way to achieve real impact. It invites all stakeholders to join in the shared vision of protecting human and peoples’ rights, strengthening the rule of law and inspiring justice.

#### 1.2 CONTEXT

6. The African Court on Human and Peoples’ Rights operates within a dynamic continental landscape defined by the African Union’s commitment to accelerated development and integrated governance. This Strategic Plan is specifically designed to align with the *African Union Strategic Plan 2024-2028* and the *Second Ten-Year Implementation Plan (2024-2033) of Agenda 2063*.

### 1.2.1 Alignment with the AU Strategic Planning Cycle

7. The AU strategic planning architecture is organized around Agenda 2063 and is cascaded into five 10-year plans. As of 2024, the AU and its organs entered the Second Ten-Year Implementation Plan (2024-2033), which is further divided into two 5-year cycles (2024-2028 and 2029-2033). To ensure total institutional alignment and synchronization with the Union-wide cycle, the African Court has adopted a 3-year period for this Strategic Plan (2026-2028). Following this transitional period, the Court will resume a 5-year planning cycle starting in 2029, fully harmonized with the AU-wide schedule.

### 1.2.2 The Court's Contribution to the Seven AU Moonshots

8. The Court serves as a vital judicial pillar in achieving the seven moonshots outlined in the AU Strategic Plan 2024-2028. By clarifying human rights obligations and holding states accountable, the Court provides the legal certainty necessary for continental transformation.
  - i. **Moonshot 1: Every AU Member State Attains at Least Middle-Income Status** – The Court contributes by protecting socio-economic rights and ensuring health security. By fostering a stable legal environment for investment, industrialization and job creation, the Court helps protect the economic resilience of African citizens.
  - ii. **Moonshot 2: Africa is More Integrated and Connected** – Through its expanding body of decisions, the Court fosters continental legal integration. By providing a common reference point for human rights standards that are cited by national courts and parliaments, the Court helps harmonize legal systems across Member States. Its role in harmonizing legal frameworks ensures that socio-economic and political integration of the continent is supported by a unified and predictable legal architecture.
  - iii. **Moonshot 3: Public Institutions Are More Responsive** – The Court directly implements the Strategic Response of Moonshot 3 through its judicial oversight which enhances transparency and accountability of governance in Africa. The Court's growing jurisprudence on fair trial rights, democratic participation and the protection of individuals against arbitrary state action ensures that public institutions at the national level remain accountable and responsive.
  - iv. **Moonshot 4: Africa Resolves Conflicts Peacefully** – By providing a legal forum for states to seek redress, such as in inter-state disputes, the Court reinforces the *Silencing the Guns* flagship project. This judicial avenue for conflict resolution promotes and supports sustainable peace.
  - v. **Moonshot 5: Africa's Values are Explicit and Promoted** – The Court safeguards Africa's cultural richness by protecting the rights of indigenous communities and addressing harmful cultural practices. This ensures that cultural identity and heritage are explicitly protected and respected within the continental legal framework.

- vi. **Moonshot 6: African Citizens Are More Empowered and Productive** – Through its case law on gender equality and the rights of children and youth, the Court removes legal barriers to empowerment. Its focus on human rights protection ensures that African citizens remain the architects of the continent's transformation.
- vii. **Moonshot 7: Africa is a Strong and Influential Global Player** – By maintaining high standards of judicial excellence and engaging with other international human rights courts, the African Court projects a robust African voice in global governance and enhances the continent's judicial sovereignty.

### 1.2.3 Ongoing Challenges and Shared Responsibility

- 9. Despite significant judicial progress, the Court continues to navigate systemic challenges that inform the 2026-2028 priorities. These include a low level of ratification of the Court's Protocol, low levels of compliance with judgments and budgetary constraints impacting on staff capacity and ability to integrate language diversity.
- 10. Recognizing that human rights problems require holistic and synergetic solutions, the Court is committed to a joint effort with a diverse ecosystem of actors. The multitude of actors involved in these processes include members of parliament, government, public administration, the judiciary, the diplomatic community, national human rights institutions, ombudspersons, academia, non-governmental organizations, the media, bar associations and law societies, the private sector as well as other (non-)African international organizations. This Strategic Plan outlines how the Court will deepen its cooperation with these stakeholders to transform judicial reasoning into tangible societal impact.

## 1.3 METHODOLOGY

- 11. The development of the 2026–2028 Strategic Plan utilized a pioneering, data-driven methodology designed to transform institutional accountability into a strategic foundation for judicial excellence. This process ensured that the new plan is credible, evidence-based and aligned with the practical operational realities of the Court.

### 1.3.1 The Implementation Report (2021–2025) as a Factual Baseline

- 12. The primary evidence for this planning cycle was derived from a comprehensive evaluation of the 2021–2025 mandate. This internal review involved:
  - i. **Data Collection and Institutional Alignment:** A rigorous assessment of performance reports, annual activity reports and interviews with Judges and Court staff. This was supplemented by questionnaires from Registry divisions regarding specific performance metrics.
  - ii. **Performance Assessment Framework:** The Court utilized a color-coded spectrum to identify critical gaps, including increases in average case

processing periods and persistent challenges relating to reporting and implementation of judgments by State Parties, that is, 88% non-reporting rate from State Parties concerning compliance with the Court's decisions. These findings served as the "Yellow" and "Orange" diagnostic markers that defined the mandatory investment areas for the 2026–2028 cycle.

- iii. **Strategic Learning:** The evaluation process drew on best monitoring and evaluation practices through engagements with the African Union Commission (AUC) Directorate of Strategic Planning and Delivery, the AUC Political Affairs, Peace and Security Department (PAPS) and the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR), during retreats in Moshi, Tanzania.

### 1.3.2 Evidence-Based Contextual Analysis

- 13. The plan incorporates action-oriented recommendations from high-level institutional engagements held between 2021 and 2025, including the Arusha Communique (2021), Tanga Staff Retreat Recommendations (2022) and Dodoma Resolutions following the second Judicial Retreat (2023). Key technical roadmaps, such as the Addis Ababa Complementarity Roadmap between the African Court and the African Commission (2023–2028) and the Commission-Court Submission and Transfer of Cases Guidelines 2025, provided the substantive framework for the "Cooperation" and "Impact" pillars of the new plan.

### 1.3.3 Stakeholder Engagement

- 14. To ensure a holistic and transparent process, the Court engaged a diverse network of actors through both internal and external validation mechanisms:
  - i. **External Stakeholder Survey:** A multi-lingual survey across all AU regions gathered data from 120 respondents representing academia, civil society, National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs), governmental officials and legal practitioners.
  - ii. **Registry Validation:** A dedicated Registry meeting in Nairobi, Kenya, in December 2025 allowed staff to conduct an evidence-driven appraisal of the initial strategic findings. This was followed by a final technical validation workshop in May 2026, where Registry staff reviewed the full draft to ensure that the planned activities and performance metrics are commensurate with the operational capacity of each Unit.
  - iii. **Judicial Validation:** The Plenary conducted a rigorous strategic appraisal of the draft to ensure that the results-based objectives are fully aligned with the Court's judicial mandate. This judicial-level review confirmed that the principle of shared responsibility is structurally embedded throughout the plan and that the institutional targets remain both ambitious and attainable.

### 1.3.4 Institutional Launch

15. The Strategic Plan was prepared for its official institutional launch in June 2026, exactly 5 years after the launch of its previous Strategic Plan 2021-2025, signalling a renewed cycle of judicial excellence.

## 1.4 STRUCTURE

16. The 2026–2028 Strategic Plan is organized into four interconnected chapters, moving from the Court’s foundational mandate to a detailed, impact-based implementation framework.
17. **Chapter 1: Introduction** establishes the Court’s new focus, its alignment with the AU Second Ten-Year Implementation Plan (2024–2033) and the evidence-based methodology used to ensure institutional continuity.
18. **Chapter 2: Situational Analysis** provides an assessment of the Court’s internal environment and external operational context. Using SWOT and PESTLE analyses, this chapter maps the Court’s strengths and lessons learned against the political and economic factors influencing human rights protection on the continent.
19. **Chapter 3: Strategic Objectives and Outputs** outlines the substantive core of the plan. While maintaining the three established Strategic Objectives (SOs) to ensure institutional stability, this chapter recalibrates their focus toward Cooperation and Impact. Recognizing that judicial impact is often influenced by factors outside the Court’s direct control, this plan adopts a *Continuous Improvement Model*. Recognizing that certain aspects of judicial impact—particularly the duration of proceedings and implementation of judgments—are influenced by factors beyond the direct control of the Court, this Strategic Plan adopts a pragmatic continuous improvement approach grounded in measurable institutional outputs. The framework therefore prioritizes indicators within the Court’s operational control, including the progressive increase in finalized cases, strengthening of judicial support systems, enhanced digitization of judicial and administrative processes and enhancement of stakeholder engagement mechanisms. This approach enables the Court to assess performance through realistic and attainable benchmarks while maintaining flexibility for continuous institutional improvement.
20. **Chapter 4: Governance and Implementation Framework** focuses on the institutionalization of Results Based Management (RBM) and advanced accountability:
  - i. **Results Based Planning and Cascading:** This chapter establishes the universal operational standard for the 2026–2028 cycle, utilizing a uniform RBM template and Joint Planning Retreats to ensure every administrative and judicial action is tied to a measurable outcome.
  - ii. **Monitoring, Evaluation and Accountability:** This section details the tools for enforcing these standards, including a dedicated MEAL Task Team and the substantive upgrade of the statutory Annual Activity Report

into a results-based assessment tool. These mechanisms ensure the Court functions as a coherent, data driven institution where progress is measured against continental priorities, such as Agenda 2063, and resources are strictly aligned with strategic results through Activity Based Budgeting (ABB).

- iii. **Risk Management and Operational Flexibility:** This section outlines the structural frameworks designed to anticipate and mitigate external and internal risks that could disrupt implementation. By embedding institutional flexibility and systematic risk assessment directly into the governance cycle, it provides the Court with the agility required to modify operational strategies, reallocate resources and adapt to shifting political or financial realities across the continent without compromising its core strategic objectives.

## 2. SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

### 2.1 ACHIEVEMENTS AND LESSONS LEARNED

21. The 2021–2025 Strategic Plan period marked an important phase in strengthening institutional performance assessment and results-based planning within the Court. The resulting Implementation Report serves a dual function: providing robust accountability for the previous mandate and acting as the primary strategic foundation for the 2026–2028 cycle.

#### 2.1.1 Performance Assessment

22. The Court concluded the 2021–2025 reporting period with an overall assessment of *Yellow (Mixed Performance with Critical Gaps)*. While functional achievements were significant, this assessment defines exactly where maximum investment is required for the next cycle.
  - i. **Exceptional Judicial Capacity:** The Court demonstrated high operational success over the previous 5-year period by finalizing 165 total cases, averaging 33 cases per year. This represents a 27% average increase in judicial output volume over the 2020 baseline (23 cases) and a 143% increase in judicial output volume over the previous 5-year cycle (2016-2020) when 69 cases were finalised.
  - ii. **Technical Analytical Architecture:** The Court initiated the development and pilot operationalization of the African Jurisprudence Database (AJUDATA) and the Status of Implementation of Decisions of the African Court (SIDAC) database, aimed at strengthening, jurisprudential access, knowledge management and institutional monitoring capacities.
  - iii. **Inter-Institutional Complementarity:** Key advancements were made in formalizing external coordination within the African Union human rights system, specifically through the Addis Ababa Complementarity Roadmap 2023–2028, the Commission-Court Submission and Transfer of Cases Guidelines 2025 and various Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) concluded with key stakeholders such as the Pan-African Parliament (PAP), the Network of African National Human Rights Institutions (NANHRI), different academic institutions and various regional and national apex courts.

#### 2.1.2 Lessons Learned

23. The performance metrics from the previous cycle transforms systemic challenges into well-defined lessons for the 2026–2028 Strategic Plan:
  - i. **Efficiency and Timeliness:** While judicial output volume remained high, the average case finalization time increased from 36 to 49 months. This 13-month regression must be understood within the context of a deliberate strategic shift between 2023 and 2025 to prioritize the conclusion of complex pending matters. This period also saw a significant decline in new cases filed, which altered the docket's composition. These factors, combined with a drop in human resources

during the previous cycle, highlight the need for continued strengthening of administrative support systems, including the gradual enhancement of digital tools and the expansion of personnel capacity.

- ii. **Relevance and Impact:** A critical enforcement gap persists, with only 2% full compliance, 10% partial compliance and an 88% non-reporting rate from State Parties. A significant implementation challenge persists, reflected in low levels of reporting and varying degrees of compliance by State Parties. In response, the Court will strengthen measures within its mandate, including follow-up mechanisms, organising compliance hearings, engagement with stakeholders, monitoring processes and awareness initiatives through the Implementation and Compliance Monitoring Unit, with a view to supporting improved implementation of the Court's decisions.
- iii. **Governance and Sustainability:** Institutional stability was hindered by an "Orange" assessment in governance (Strategic Outcome 3), caused by the non-adoption of three foundational strategies on Human Resources Development, Resource Mobilization and Infrastructure. Resolving this policy stagnation is a primary justification for the structural reform agenda in 2026.
- iv. **Coherence and Effectiveness:** To address complementarity gaps, the next cycle must formalize coordination with the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) and the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACERWC) while.

### 2.1.3 Strategic Learning and Institutional Foundation

24. The transition from the previous cycle establishes the following institutional requirements:
- i. **Strengthening a Performance Driven Culture:** Strengthening a performance-oriented institutional culture through periodic strategic review processes aimed at enhancing coordination, accountability and evidence-based decision-making.
  - ii. **Results Based Management (RBM):** Completing the transition from activity-based reporting to RBM, ensuring all objectives include integrated costing to align resources with outcomes.
  - iii. **Financial Sustainability:** Prioritizing the development of a diversified funding model and advocating for a ring-fenced Trust Fund to secure long-term judicial independence and institutional permanence.

## 2.2 SWOT ANALYSIS

25. The following SWOT analysis identifies the internal and external factors that will influence the Court's ability to deliver on the 2026–2028 mandate. This assessment is grounded in the diagnostic data of the previous cycle and the evolving continental landscape.

### 2.2.1 Strengths (Internal)

- i. **Established Judicial Excellence:** The Court has a proven capacity for high judicial output, finalizing 165 cases in the previous cycle, and an expanding jurisprudence that is increasingly cited by national courts and parliaments.
- ii. **Well-functioning Legal Aid System:** Deserving applicants benefit from a robust legal aid scheme that significantly reduces financial barriers to litigation and ensures equitable access to justice for the indigent and vulnerable.
- iii. **Technical Oversight Infrastructure:** The progressive operationalization of the African Jurisprudence Database (AJUDATA) and the Status of Implementation of Decisions of the African Court (SIDAC) database provide a unique, data-driven foundation for strengthening access to and monitoring continental human rights jurisprudence. This infrastructure is further strengthened by the implementation and revision of critical institutional policies, including those governing the Library, Language services, and the Internship and Placement program, ensuring a comprehensive framework to support the judicial processes.
- iv. **Dedicated Institutional Leadership:** The Court benefits from highly qualified, independent Judges and competent Registry staff committed to the enhanced implementation of Result-Based Governance.
- v. **Fiscal Discipline and Clean Audit Compliance:** The Court maintains a robust track record of institutional integrity characterized by high budget execution rates and successive unqualified audit opinions from the African Union Board of External Auditors. The absence of audit queries or material reservations reflects the strength of the internal financial controls, rigorous compliance with administrative regulations and exceptional governance standards. This sustained financial accountability reinforces the public credibility of the institution and builds long term trust with African Union policy organs and international partners.
- vi. **Strategic Complementarity Frameworks:** Formalized working relationships with the ACHPR and ACERWC are supported by the 2025 Submission and Transfer of Cases Guidelines and the Addis Ababa Complementarity Roadmap.
- vii. **Holistic Thematic Reorganization and Specialized Legal Capacity:** The strategic administrative restructuring of the Legal Division into specialized units has vastly enhanced operational efficiency and analytical performance. Moving beyond a generic framework, the Division now operates via dedicated tracks—the Judicial Matters Unit, the Research and Capacity Building Unit, the Legal Aid Unit and the Implementation and Compliance Monitoring Unit. This targeted reorganization provides the Registry with the precise technical capacity required to expedite case management, undertake activities related to the implementation of judgments and manage compliance reporting.

### 2.2.2 Weaknesses (Internal)

- i. **Referral and Complementarity Dormancy:** The ACHPR has not referred any cases to the Court during the 2021–2025 cycle, while the Court has similarly under-utilized the Commission’s specialized mandate for on-site investigations and fact-finding in pending matters. This mutual inactivity in operationalizing referral and transfer guidelines undermines the intended synergy of the African human rights system and prevents a holistic approach to continental human rights protection.
- ii. **Structural Omission (ACERWC):** The delay in consideration by the AU Policy Organs of the proposal to amend the Court’s Protocol to grant the ACERWC standing, leaves the judicial protection of children’s rights structurally disconnected from the Court.
- iii. **Regression in Case Processing Efficiency:** The 13-month increase in average case finalization time (from 36 to 49 months) remains a critical bottleneck to timely justice.
- iv. **Uneven Adoption of Result-Based Governance:** Inconsistent application of RBM across all Registry Divisions and Units has hindered the transition from activity-based to impact-based reporting.
- v. **Governance and Policy Gaps:** The delayed adoption of foundational strategies for Human Resources Development, Resource Mobilization and Infrastructure has created significant operational constraints and hindered long-term institutional planning. Resolving this policy stagnation is a priority for the 2026–2028 cycle to ensure that the Court’s administrative framework is fully aligned with its judicial ambitions.
- vi. **Linguistic, Capacity and Staffing Constraints:** A staff occupancy rate of 75.56%, coupled with a critical need for a more specialized staff structure, restricts the Court’s operational efficacy. The current organizational design lacks sufficient specialized units required to handle complex, evolving judicial demands. This structural limitation, combined with a constrained capacity to provide judicial services and translate decisions simultaneously into all six African Union working languages, directly hinders the Court’s overall accessibility, visibility and continental impact.

### 2.2.3 Opportunities (External)

- i. **Alignment with Agenda 2063 Moonshots:** The Court is uniquely positioned to provide the legal certainty required for the AU Second Ten-Year Implementation Plan, particularly regarding responsive institutions and conflict resolution.
- ii. **Strategic Optimization of Advisory Jurisdiction** The increasing utilization of advisory opinion proceedings offers a vital opportunity to expand the Court’s continental footprint, effectively navigating the current structural limitations of the Article 34(6) declaration system. By providing state actors, African Union organs and recognized African organizations with a non-contentious

mechanism for authoritative legal guidance, this jurisdiction serves as a collaborative consultative tool rather than an adversarial instrument. This allows the Court to clarify complex treaty obligations, build institutional trust and inspire regional policy makers without generating political friction or perceived threats to state sovereignty.

- iii. **Amicable Settlement Framework:** The adoption of the Amicable Settlement Guidelines offers a new pathway for more efficient and effective dispute resolution.
- iv. **Digital Transformation:** The widespread availability of digital communication tools offers an opportunity to enhance further, the use of an E-case management system and continental outreach.
- v. **Judicial Diplomacy and Institutional Networks:** The strategic expansion of the Court's judicial diplomacy outwards provides a vital pathway for embedding its jurisprudence within national systems by engaging an expansive network of domestic and regional actors beyond the traditional judiciary. While formal alliances through different African judicial networks, including the African Judicial Network, the African Judicial Training Network (AJTN) and the Africa Judges and Jurists Forum remain essential, the Court actively leverages its institutional diplomacy to reach key state actors, including national legislatures, ministries of justice, law enforcement organs and national human rights institutions. By cultivating high level technical and diplomatic alliances across this broader ecosystem, the Court ensures that the African Charter is not only applied consistently by judges, but is also integrated directly into domestic policy making, legislative drafting and administrative enforcement mechanisms across the continent.
- vi. **Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships:** The activation of formal Memoranda of Understanding with key institutional partners—such as the Network of African National Human Rights Institutions (NANHRI), the Pan-African Parliament, and different regional courts (ECOWAS, EAC and WAEMU)—offers a clear pathway to address the compliance gap. Furthermore, technical collaborations with academic centres of excellence, including the Centre for Human Rights at the University of Pretoria and the Raoul Wallenberg Institute, alongside engagement with AGA-APSA platform members, bar associations, and civil society, facilitate collective advocacy. These structured partnerships provide a framework for enhanced dialogue, advocacy, reporting and follow-up regarding the implementation of the Court's decisions and broader human rights obligations.
- vii. **Revitalizing National Focal Points:** The existing framework for Designated National Focal Points, though currently underutilised, presents a strategic opportunity to create direct technical channels for the implementation of Court decisions and the facilitation of judicial dialogue at the domestic level.

#### 2.2.4 Threats (External)

- i. **The Enforcement and Reporting Deficit:** An 88% non-reporting rate and systemic non-compliance by State Parties threaten the perceived legitimacy and effectiveness of the Court.
- ii. **Narrowing Jurisdictional Gateway:** The withdrawal of Article 34(6) declarations by certain Member States limits direct access for individuals and NGOs, the primary litigants of the Court.
- iii. **Financial and Political Uncertainty:** The lack of a ring-fenced Trust Fund makes the Court vulnerable to budget cuts and shifts in political will at the continental level.
- iv. **Conflict and Democratic Regression:** Political instability and unconstitutional changes of government in parts of the continent create a challenging environment for the enforcement of human rights judgments.

### 2.3 PESTLE ANALYSIS

26. The PESTLE Analysis for the 2026–2028 Strategic Plan provides a comprehensive assessment of the external macro-environmental factors that will influence the Court's ability to deliver impactful justice. This analysis synthesizes the context of the African Union (AU) with the specific judicial challenges identified in the 2021–2025 Implementation Report.

#### 2.3.1 Political Factors

- i. **Geopolitical Fragmentation:** Africa is navigating a complex interplay of internal governance dynamics and external geostrategic competition. While the AU's admission to the G20 enhances the continent's global voice, a resurgence of unconstitutional changes of government and protectionist political stances among some Member States creates a challenging environment for supranational judicial authority.
- ii. **Continental Rule of Law:** The impact of the African Court remains closely tied to the diverse levels of political commitment to the rule of law across Member States. While several Member States demonstrate a continuous commitment to democratic principles, constitutional retrogression observed in certain regions poses a major challenge. The political institutionalization of justice further restricts judicial independence, weakens the separation of powers and tends to eliminate political debate and freedom of expression, consequently shrinking the space for human rights protection. In environments where judicial independence is constrained, the Court's ability to deliver effective justice is frequently obstructed by external interference, corruption or a systemic lack of domestic enforcement for its rulings.
- iii. **The Enforcement Crisis:** A persistent political will gap exists, characterized by an 88% non-reporting rate on judgment implementation. These persistent challenges relating to reporting and implementation of judgments by some State

Parties adversely impacts on the effectiveness of the Court. The Court's relevance is threatened by a jurisdictional contraction as five Member States have withdrawn their Article 34(6) declarations, narrowing the gateway for individual and NGO access to the Court.

- iv. **Referral Inactivity:** The dormancy of the ACHPR as a referral portal—having referred zero cases in the 2021–2025 cycle—undermines the intended synergy of the African human rights system and requires urgent revitalized judicial diplomacy.

### 2.3.2 Economic Factors

- i. **Macroeconomic Volatility and Debt:** While Africa's real GDP growth is projected at 4.14% for 2025, high debt levels and commodity price swings limit the fiscal space of Member States. This economic pressure often results in budgetary fluctuations for AU organs.
- ii. **Financial Dependency and Autonomy:** The Court remains structurally reliant on AU assessed contributions, with access to partner funding constrained by Executive Council decisions. The lack of a ring-fenced Trust Fund or diversified funding model creates a vulnerability that threatens the Court's long-term judicial independence.
- iii. **AfCFTA and Integration:** The expansion of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) provides an economic opportunity. The Court contributes to providing the legal certainty and harmonized legal standards necessary for a connected and integrated continental market in so far as they relate to human rights issues.

### 2.3.3 Social Factors

- i. **Demographic Dividend and Youth Engagement:** With over 60% of Africa's population under the age of 35, there is an increasing demand for responsive public institutions and people-centred justice. The youth population represents both a potential litigant base and a primary beneficiary of the Court's jurisprudence on education and digital rights.
- ii. **Public Trust and Human Rights Awareness:** There is a growing continental discourse on reparations and restorative justice. However, the 49-month average case finalization delay risks eroding public trust.
- iii. **Linguistic Diversity:** Africa's vast linguistic landscape requires the Court to move beyond its current language constraints to provide jurisprudence in all six official AU languages to ensure true continental inclusivity.

### 2.3.4 Technological Factors

- i. **The Digital Transformation Mandate:** The AU Digital Transformation Strategy (DTS) offers a leapfrogging opportunity. While the Court has initiated this through AJUDATA and the E-Library, the transition to a fully integrated, multilingual e-case management framework will enhance annual case disposal rates. For this digital transition to demonstrably enhance case disposal rates, it must be supported by commensurate investments in language services, including the recruitment of specialized staff and the expansion of translation capacity to ensure seamless judicial interaction across all AU languages.
- ii. **Cybersecurity and Data Sovereignty:** As judicial systems digitize, the threats of cyber-attacks and data breaches increase. The Court must prioritize a robust IT security audit and the localization of judicial data to protect the integrity of its proceedings and the privacy of litigants.
- iii. **AI and Innovation:** Emerging trends in Artificial Intelligence (AI) offer significant potential for optimizing legal research and judicial administration. However, realizing these benefits requires specialized capacity building to ensure judicial officers can navigate the ethical implications and digital literacy requirements of an evolving technological landscape.

### 2.3.5 Legal Factors

- i. **Diversity of Legal Systems:** Adjudicating across common law, civil law, customary law and Islamic law systems remains a core structural challenge. This necessitates jurisprudential harmonization to ensure the African Charter is applied consistently across diverse national contexts.
- ii. **The Role of National Courts as Primary Enforcers:** The domestic judicial systems of Member States constitute the first line of defence and the primary enforcers of the African Charter. Because the African Court is a subsidiary body, its ultimate efficacy depends on national courts embracing regional jurisprudence, utilizing the Charter in domestic adjudication and ensuring the execution of regional remedies. A major legal factor is therefore the varying degree of willingness, capacity and independence of domestic judiciaries to align their rulings with international human rights standards, reinforcing the reality that continental justice is a shared responsibility.
- iii. **The amendments to the Court's Protocol:** The suspended amendment of the Court's Protocol to grant the ACERWC standing before the Court, leave children's rights structurally disconnected from the African Court.
- iv. **Complementarity Weaknesses:** While foundational frameworks exist—such as the Maputo Communique (2022), the Addis Ababa Complementarity Roadmap (2022) and the Guidelines on Submission and Transfer of Cases (2025)—the limited operational coherence between the Court, the ACHPR and the ACERWC leads to potential duplication of efforts and a fragmented African human rights architecture. A fundamental legal hurdle is the lack of a shared, common understanding among these regional organs regarding the exact

judicial role and boundaries of the Court under its establishing Protocol. This conceptual misalignment, combined with the lack of a formalized and automated referral system, severely restricts operational synergy and prevents the continental human rights system from functioning as a cohesive protective shield.

### 2.3.6 Environmental Factors

- i. **Climate Justice and Human Rights:** Climate change is a crisis factor affecting the right to food, housing and life. As environmental protection and climate-related displacement increasingly intersect with the African Charter, the Court must ensure its judicial and research capacity is prepared to adjudicate such complex matters when submitted for its consideration. This necessitates a data-driven understanding of emerging environmental jurisprudence to ensure the Court remains a relevant and effective forum for rights protection in the 21st century.
- ii. **Climate and Emergency Resilience:** Frequent climate-related disasters and public health emergencies place significant strain on national administrative systems. These crises can disrupt the legislative and administrative processes required for the domestication of AU treaties and the timely implementation of the Court's decisions. The Court must therefore focus on building a more resilient judicial dialogue that can withstand such systemic shocks and ensure that rights protection remains a priority during periods of emergency.

## 2.4 SYNTHESIS: STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT FOR IMPACT

27. The convergence of the evaluative insights (SWOT) and the external macro-environmental pressures (PESTLE) confirms that the African Court has reached a critical evolutionary junction. While the institution possesses a high-performing technical analytical architecture and proven judicial productivity, these strengths are increasingly neutralized by an external enforcement crisis and internal policy stagnation. The 13 -month case processing regression and the 88% non-reporting compliance rate are not merely administrative challenges, they are systemic risks to the Court's continental legitimacy. Consequently, the 2026–2028 Strategic Plan is designed not as a continuation of previous cycles, but as a decisive structural pivot. By transitioning further to a results-based management (RBM) culture and operationalizing the principle of *shared responsibility*, the Court aims to transform these identified vulnerabilities into a foundation of institutional resilience capable of delivering accessible and impactful justice across the continent.

### 3. STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES AND OUTPUTS

28. This section provides the substantive roadmap for the 2026–2028 Strategic Plan. It translates the broad mandate of the Court into specific judicial and administrative actions, grounded in the institutional recognition that human rights protection is a collective continental endeavour.

#### METHODOLOGY OF CONTINUOUS PROGRESS

29. The Court maintains its established three-goal framework to ensure institutional continuity and a balanced focus on its core functions:
- Strategic Objective 1: Improved Judicial Processes
  - Strategic Objective 2: Enhanced Outreach and Cooperation
  - Strategic Objective 3: Strengthened Institutional Capacity
30. While these goals remain consistent, the methodology for this strategic period has been refined to align with a more resilient model of results-based governance. In the previous cycle, several high-level numerical targets remained unmet. The Court recognized that these lag results—such as the rate of state compliance (+30%) or the total budget allocation (+50%)—measure performance effects that are determined by external political and financial factors largely beyond its direct influence.
31. For the 2026–2028 period, the Court has adopted a model of *continuous improvement* that prioritizes the year-on-year rate of institutional progress. Rather than focusing on an arbitrary, static number in the distance, we measure success by our ability to move projects from a pilot or draft stage to sustained operational use, where performance is continuously optimized through a permanent process of evaluation and improvement. As long as the trend for identified challenges is moving downward and the functionality of our systems is improving, the institution is fulfilling its promise.

#### STRUCTURE

32. To ensure a clear transition from strategy to daily operation, each output in the following sections is organized through a cascading structure:
- Output Narrative:** A brief explanation of the objective and how it relies on the coordinated participation of Member States, national judiciaries, National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs), bar associations, law societies, civil society, National Focal Points and AU Policy Organs to be effective.
  - Baseline (December 2025):** A factual snapshot of the Court’s current status at the end of the previous cycle, as documented in the Implementation Report (2021-2025).
  - Strategic Focus:** A description of the primary acceleration or change required over the next three years to move from the current baseline to an operational reality.

- iv. **Definition of Success:** A qualitative description of the desired institutional state by January 2029.
  - v. **Key Annual Performance Targets (2026–2028):** Specific benchmarks to monitor the rate of progress on a yearly basis.
  - vi. **Strategic Interventions:** A phased roadmap of judicial and administrative activities divided into short-term (2026), mid-term (2027) and long-term (2028) priorities.
33. This methodology ensures that every intervention is grounded in the current reality of the Court while providing a clear path toward a more autonomous and effective judicial institution.

### **3.1 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1: IMPROVED JUDICIAL PROCESSES**

34. The delivery of justice is the primary reason for the Court's existence. This objective encompasses the entire judicial chain, from the initial filing of an application to the final execution of a remedy. Building on the results-based management (RBM) framework established in the previous cycle, the Court now shifts its focus toward the practical optimization of its existing procedures. The goal is to move from the finalization of internal policies toward the practical strengthening and optimization of existing judicial processes that yields a measurable impact on the lives of African citizens.
35. The following five strategic outputs represent a commitment to a continuous improvement framework. This approach prioritizes the elimination of procedural bottlenecks, the enhancement of legal reasoning, the removal of systemic barriers to user-centred justice, the promotion of collaborative dispute resolution through amicable settlements and the strengthening of measures within the Court's mandate aimed at supporting awareness, follow-up and engagement regarding the implementation of judgments. In line with the principle of shared responsibility, these improvements are designed to function within a continental ecosystem where the Court's efficiency and effectiveness is supported by the proactive engagement of Member States, national judiciaries, National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs), bar associations, law societies, civil society, Designated National Focal Points and AU Policy Organs.

## OUTPUT 1.1: INCREASED EFFICIENCY OF JUDICIAL PROCEDURES

36. The Court's ability to protect human rights in Africa is fundamentally tied to its procedural efficiency. While the 2021–2025 period saw an increase of judicial output at approximately 33 judgments per year, the average case processing time rose to 49 months. This must be understood within the context of a strategic prioritization of dealing with backlog cases, complex pending matters and the part-time judicial model. To avoid a docket crisis and maintain institutional legitimacy, the Court must adopt innovative, data-driven working methods. During this strategic cycle, the Court will prioritize the completion of backlog cases through realistic, capacity-based planning, while strengthening case management practices and judicial support systems. These efforts remain dependent on adequate institutional resources and the timely cooperation of parties to proceedings

### BASELINE (DECEMBER 2025):

37. As of 31 December 2025, the Court's operational baseline reflects an increased judicial output but a growing backlog, summarized by the following key metrics:
- i. **Annual judicial output:** 20 cases finalized in 2025.
  - ii. **Average case processing time:** 49 months. (Calculated as the arithmetic mean duration from formal registration to final procedural disposal for the totality of cases finalized across the Court's operational lifespan through December 2025).
  - iii. **Docket Composition and Backlog:** A total pending caseload of 108 cases, of which 74 are defined as backlog (pending files registered prior to 2023 that have exceeded the indicative 36-month capacity-based standard for finalization of a case from the time of registration to finalisation ).
  - iv. **Linguistic Availability of Jurisprudence:** There is a 72% average availability of judgments and orders in four working languages, with 99% availability in English and French, 52% in Portuguese, and 37% in Arabic. While there are some judgments and orders available in Kiswahili, they are not yet accessible on the Court's digital platforms as the Kiswahili version of the website is pending operationalization. Spanish remains a critical data gap. It should be noted that the AU adopted Spanish and Kiswahili as working languages of the AU in 2021 and 2022, respectively and the implementation of the said decisions was as from 2023 .
  - v. **Digitalization status:** 97% digitization rate for judicial files.

### STRATEGIC FOCUS:

38. The Court will prioritize the progressive clearance of historical backlog cases through a structured and capacity-based approach, while strengthening the efficiency of judicial processes for newly filed applications. In this regard, the Court will continue to improve existing case management systems and progressively

explore the integration of digital initiatives, including AJUDATA, in a manner that ensures complementarity with systems already operational within the Registry. The primary objective for this strategic cycle is to ensure a measurable increase in finalized cases and a more current and manageable docket by January 2029.

## **DEFINITION OF SUCCESS:**

39. For this strategic cycle, success is defined by achieving the following state by January 2029:

- i. **Progressive backlog reduction:** Achieve a measurable year-on-year reduction in the number of pending cases originating from the 2017–2025 cohorts, with the objective of maintaining a more current and manageable docket aligned with the Court’s operational capacity.
- ii. **Strengthened Judicial Process Management:** Judicial processes are supported by enhanced digitization, improved case management practices, enhanced coordination mechanisms and strengthened specializations within the Legal Division and administrative support systems
- iii. **Enhanced Digital Support Systems:** Existing digital systems are progressively strengthened and made interoperable through the gradual integration of AJUDATA and related platforms to support case management functions, jurisprudential access and reporting on decision implementation.
- iv. **Multilingual Jurisprudence and Language Services:** The Court ensures that its entire body of decisions is available and searchable in English and French. The Court will implement a phased strategy to increase the percentage of decisions available in Arabic and Portuguese with the goal of finalizing new translations within one quarter of their delivery and reduction of backlog of translations (where the backlog is defined as decisions rendered before 2023). Regarding Kiswahili and Spanish, the Court will prioritize the availing of decisions involving Respondent States that use Kiswahili and landmark decisions to progressively increase linguistic availability. The full realization of these targets is contingent upon the mobilization of dedicated financial resources for the translation services into these two languages and the recruitment of additional language staff.
- v. **Institutionalized Shared Responsibility:** Through the facilitative role of National Focal Points for the Court designated by Member States and the proactive engagement of other state representatives, parties to the proceedings consistently adhere to procedural deadlines. This coordinated approach ensures that the written phase of judicial proceedings is concluded within the Court’s prescribed timelines, with National Focal Points serving as vital internal coordination channels to reduce the administrative delays that lead to requests for extensions of time to file pleadings.

## KEY ANNUAL PERFORMANCE TARGETS (2026–2028):

40. To achieve this vision, the Court will monitor its progress against the following key annual targets, designed to measure both the stabilization of the current docket and the gradual transition toward a more efficient processing cycle:
- i. **Targeted Output for Clearance:** Achieve a measurable annual increase in final decisions (minimum 20 annually with increase year on year) prioritizing the historical backlog, while bearing in mind that higher numbers of cases disposed of are directly contingent upon an increase in judicial, language, and research resources.
  - ii. **Reduction in case processing time:** Progressive strengthening of judicial process management through improved workflow coordination, enhanced research and language support and capacity-based docket management
  - iii. **Backlog management:** Record a continuous annual decrease in the number of pending cases that exceed the Court's indicative 36-month processing benchmark, taking into account the complexity of cases, available resources and the level of cooperation by parties to proceedings
  - iv. **System Digitalization:** Annual increase in the percentage of the judicial cycle supported by integrated digital management frameworks, focusing on the transition from manual processing to automated workflows for case registration, docketing and compliance monitoring.
  - v. **Improvement in linguistic coverage:** Year-on-year increase of the decisions of the Court available in the six AU working languages.

## STRATEGIC INTERVENTIONS:

41. The following phased interventions represent the technical and operational roadmap required to bridge the gap between the 2025 baseline and the 2029 target state:

### 2026

- i. **Capacity-Based Processing Benchmark:** Utilize the 36-month period as an indicative operational benchmark for the management of newly filed cases, recognizing that its attainment remains dependent on the Court's available judicial, research and administrative resources, as well as the timely submission of pleadings by parties
- ii. **AJUDATA System Expansion:** Progressively enhance AJUDATA and related digital tools to support jurisprudential research, institutional knowledge management and selected case-monitoring functions in coordination with existing Registry systems
- iii. **Shared Responsibility Framework:** Operationalize the principle of shared responsibility by leveraging National Focal Points to ensure the timely

submission of pleadings and reduce extensions that compromise the Court's efficiency.

- iv. **Workflow Optimization:** Implement the standardized execution of case management Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and establish a fixed annual SOPs review date in the Court workplan to ensure administrative procedures remain commensurate with evolving docket management best practices.
- v. **Internal Deliberation Efficiency:** Enhanced implementation of the Internal Judicial Practice through the application of strict time-management benchmarks for judicial deliberations. This includes the consistent utilization of the administrative silent procedure for the review of drafts, ensuring that the judicial process adheres to established timelines to support the overall efficiency of the case processing cycle.
- vi. **Active Management via AJUDATA:** Utilize available digital tools, including AJUDATA, to support monitoring of pending cases, identification of procedural needs such as provision of legal aid, amicable settlement or transfer to ACHPR and improved coordination of judicial workflows.
- vii. **Digital Language Tracking:** Develop internal digital tracking mechanisms to support monitoring of translation workflows and identification of bottlenecks in the workflow and for prioritization of resources for increasing the availability of decisions in Arabic, Kiswahili, Portuguese and Spanish reduction of the backlog.

## 2027

- i. **Procedural Reform:** Finalize the review of the Rules of Procedure and other instruments related to the judicial process, focusing on the clarification of procedural steps to identify and eliminate redundancies contributing to judicial delays.
- ii. **Support Staff Feasibility:** Re-evaluate the recruitment or secondment of Judicial Assistants with requisite language competencies to provide specialized research support to Judges-Rapporteur.
- iii. **Workforce Alignment:** Ensure the Registry Office, Legal Division, Language Unit, IT and Webmaster workforces are resourced to meet the requirements of case disposal targets.
- iv. **Resource Mobilization for Language and Digital Support Systems:** Pursue efforts to secure ring-fenced funding for the clearance of the translation backlog and the technical maintenance of the existing digital systems and AJUDATA to strengthen judicial and translation efficiency.

## 2028

- i. **AJUDATA Integration Audit:** Conduct an internal technical audit of the success in integration of AJUDATA with existing digital platforms and their contribution to

the enhancement of the automation of the judicial process workflow and identify potential for further homegrown adaptations to the Court's unique needs.

- ii. **Data-Driven Policy:** Institutionalize the regular use of existing digital platforms and AJUDATA performance data—including time-to-finalization, backlog composition, individual productivity, and multilingual completion rates—to inform all future judicial, administrative and linguistic policies.
- iii. **Strategic Docket Management:** Utilize insights from existing digital platforms and AJUDATA to proactively identify and implement matters that are suitable for joinder, for potential amicable settlement or transfer to the ACHPR, and map systemic human rights trends. This integrated approach will maximize the Court's transformative impact while strategically reducing the individual caseload through the resolution of clustered applications.

## OUTPUT 1.2: IMPROVED QUALITY OF JUDICIAL DECISIONS

42. Judicial efficiency must be matched by the highest standards of legal reasoning, technical precision and linguistic accessibility. As the Court's jurisprudence matures, the focus shifts from foundational standardization to a sophisticated quality assurance framework. This will involve addressing gaps that have been identified from implementation of the Revised Rules of Procedure of the Court of 2020, arising from (e.g. on *amicus curiae* and *intervention*). There will also be institutionalization of evolving drafting practices through a wider range of specialized templates, to ensure clarity and consistency. The realization of this output as the continent's leading judicial authority for human rights law relies on the coordinated participation of litigants, state counsel, bar associations, law societies, academic institutions, CSOs and NHRIs to provide high-quality legal submissions and specialized *amicus curiae* briefs that enrich the Court's deliberative process.

### BASELINE (DECEMBER 2025)

43. As of 31 December 2025, the institutional baseline for judicial quality reflects significant foundational progress alongside persistent policy and linguistic gaps, as follows:
- i. **Technical Standardization:** Formats for case summaries, judgments and rulings on provisional measures were adopted in 2022. However, formats for different types of procedural orders are yet to be adopted.
  - ii. **Style Guide Compliance:** There is need for enhanced adherence to standardized templates requires further refinement.
  - iii. **Policy Gaps:** Although the *Amicus Curiae* and Research policies were not adopted, the ongoing process of revising the Rules of Procedure and the administrative establishment of a Research Unit within the Legal Division will facilitate institutionalizing a structured framework for external legal engagement and internal research development.
  - iv. **Linguistic Availability of Case Summaries:** Current performance with regard to pending cases is EN: 44%, FR: 26%, AR: 6%, PT: 7%, SW: 0%, SP: 0%), representing a significant awareness gap across the continent.
  - v. **Research Infrastructure:** The digital architecture for the E-library is established, but the platform requires a systematic population of human rights jurisprudence and academic literature.

### STRATEGIC FOCUS:

44. The Court will elevate the technical and legal quality of its jurisprudence by leveraging use of amici briefs and available research capacities and institutionalizing a systematic technical review framework for all categories of draft decisions. This administrative review ensures that draft decisions comply with established templates and linguistic standards before they are submitted for

judicial deliberation. The focus is on ensuring that the Registry provides high level legal support to the Judges through refined drafting templates that evolve alongside judicial practice. This includes leveraging digital language terminology databases to improve the clarity, consistency and coherence of drafts and enhance translation outcomes.

## DEFINITION OF SUCCESS:

45. For this strategic cycle, success is defined by achieving the following state by January 2029:

- i. **Refined Drafting Environment:** A comprehensive set of templates for all decision types (Judgments, Orders and Rulings) is in active use and undergoes reviews as necessary to incorporate evolving judicial practice.
- ii. **Procedural Clarifications and Enhancement of Research Capacity:** The Revised Rules of Procedure clarify on the processes for filing and handling of *Amicus Curiae* briefs and the specialized research support services are in place to support the work of the Court. These initiatives will ensure that the participation of *amici curiae* and the conduct of judicial research is managed through consistent, high-level technical standards.
- iii. **Deployment of digitized terminology databases:** Existing digital tools and AJUDATA support standardization of terminology and alignment between legal drafting and translation outcomes thus contributing to consistency and coherence of the Court's decisions and availability of decisions in various languages.
- iv. **Progressive Research Repository:** The E-library is progressively filled with relevant human rights publications and international jurisprudence, functioning as a reliable research tool for the Judges, the Registry, and the broader continental legal community—including litigants, legal practitioners, and researchers. This open-access platform ensures that all stakeholders have the necessary resources to provide high-quality submissions.
- v. **Linguistic Recency:** All Case Summaries for pending cases are available in the six AU working languages, achieved through a LIFO translation strategy that prioritizes new filings before addressing the backlog.

## KEY ANNUAL PERFORMANCE TARGETS (2026–2028):

46. To achieve this vision, the Court will monitor its progress against the following key annual targets designed to measure the maturation of the Court's legal and technical output:

- i. **Template Diversification:** Increase in the number of specialized decision formats or templates (e.g., for strike-out or compliance orders) that are finalized and adopted.

- ii. **Procedural Clarifications and Enhancement of Research Capacity:** Clarification of procedures relating to amicus curiae and intervention and enhancing the research capacity of the Court.
- iii. **LIFO Translation Progress:** Measurable year-on-year increase in the percentage of Case Summaries available in all six working languages, starting with the most recent filings.
- iv. **AJUDATA Development:** Year-on-year enhancement of existing digital platforms and AJUDATA functionalities towards increasing drafting consistency, terminology database management and institutional knowledge-sharing.
- v. **Research Population:** Consistent quarterly increase in the volume of academic and jurisprudential records uploaded to the E-library.

## **STRATEGIC INTERVENTIONS:**

47. The following phased interventions represent the technical and operational roadmap required to bridge the gap between the 2025 baseline and the 2029 target state:

### **2026**

- i. **Procedural clarifications and enhancement of research capacities:** Through the process of revision of the Rules of Court, clarify on the procedures for filing and management of amicus curiae briefs and submissions on interventions. The Court's research capacity will continue being enhanced by leveraging available research capacities to systematize internal legal research.
- ii. **Adherence to Drafting Templates:** Enhance adherence to templates of decisions and regularly review the templates to align them with evolving judicial practice.
- iii. **LIFO Translation Mobilization:** Initiate a LIFO strategy for Case Summaries, into all six AU working languages to ensure relatively new cases are immediately accessible.
- iv. **Continued operationalization and integration of AJUDATA:** Continue the phased operationalization and institutional rollout of AJUDATA functionalities related to case management, jurisprudential access and research support.
- v. **Digital Research Activation:** Progressively populate the e-library with core human rights publications to maximize the platform's utility as an important institutional research resource.

### **2027**

- i. **Digitizing Decision Templates:** Create smart templates for diverse decision types with automated population of standard language

- ii. **Capacity Building on use of digital platforms:** Develop and start implementation of a comprehensive training program for Judges, Registry staff, National Focal Points, and external stakeholders—including bar associations and CSOs—as part of the continued operationalization of the existing digital platforms and AJUDATA.
- iii. **Digital Onboarding for Parties:** Develop and disseminate user-friendly guidelines for parties to the proceedings, ensuring external stakeholders can effectively utilize relevant digital platforms and AJUDATA for case-tracking and thematic research.
- iv. **Term base reviews:** Implement a standard operating procedure where sessional glossary updates involve a regular joint review by the Registry's Legal Division and Language Unit to ensure drafting consistency and coherence.

## 2028

- i. **Knowledge Management Integration:** Finalize the merger of the E-library with the internal knowledge management system to create a unified digital repository for judicial research and institutional memory.
- ii. **Manual for Hearings:** Systematize best practices for the organization and conduct of public and compliance hearings by developing comprehensive procedural manuals.
- iii. **Review of data from Digital Platforms and AJUDATA:** Utilize data from digital platforms to identify areas where templates or guidelines need further refinement based on the previous year's judicial output.

## OUTPUT 1.3: IMPROVED ACCESS TO THE AFRICAN COURT'S PROCEDURES

48. The Court's ability to protect human rights in Africa is fundamentally tied to its accessibility. For victims in pursuit of justice, procedural requirements must not be overly burdensome. If the Court does not account for the socio-economic context in which it operates—or fails to provide reasonable solutions to overcome obstacles such as language, distance and digital divides—it risks failing the most vulnerable members of the community. The realization of this output relies on the shared responsibility of the Court, Member States, and National Focal Points to collectively eliminate systemic barriers. While the Court ensures the supply of inclusive judicial services, the effectiveness of these measures remains contingent upon Member States and National Focal Points providing the necessary domestic infrastructure and localized support to ensure a seamless, first-class user experience for all litigants.

### BASELINE (DECEMBER 2025):

49. As of 31 December 2025, the Court's operational baseline reflects significant digital maturation alongside persistent policy and publication backlogs:
- i. **Universal Digital Adoption:** The Court recorded a ~95% electronic filing rate, effectively making digital submission the primary standard for the parties.
  - ii. **Legal Aid Capacity:** The Roster of Legal Counsel was expanded to 241 lawyers, surpassing the target; however, the training of counsel remains at the halfway mark (114 total) due to budgetary constraints.
  - iii. **Policy Readiness:** Significant progress was achieved in the 2021–2025 cycle with the adoption of the Language Policy and the establishment of a Roster for Freelance Legal Professionals. Additionally, the Legal Aid Policy and Manual on Procedures have reached technical completion, while the Judicial Service Delivery Policy is currently undergoing internal Registry consultation and refinement prior to institutional validation.
  - iv. **Information Infrastructure:** AJUDATA (Online Case Law Database) and the Research Hub are functional, but a backlog exists for Annual Law Reports (2022–2024) and decision uploads to the AU Common Repository (11.6%).
  - v. **Service Quality Monitoring:** A 100% grant rate was maintained for deserving legal aid applicants through the effective use of internal monitoring tools developed by the Legal Aid team. However, the pending adoption of the Judicial Service Delivery Policy currently limits the Court's ability to conduct systematic, Court-wide audits of user satisfaction across all judicial and administrative touchpoints.
  - vi. **Linguistic Accessibility:** While the Court is committed to full multilingualism, there is a recognized delay in synchronizing digital resources, including the website and FAQ sections, across all AU working languages. This challenge is particularly acute for Kiswahili and Spanish, following their adoption as AU working languages in 2023 and 2024, respectively. The Court is currently

prioritizing the retrospective alignment of foundational documents in these languages to match the established standards of the initial four working languages.

## **STRATEGIC FOCUS:**

50. The Court will implement the revised legal aid policy and the adoption of the judicial service policy to ensure that the administration of justice remains accessible, transparent and user-friendly. The focus is on realizing a shared responsibility for accessibility, where technology remains a bridge rather than a barrier. This includes clearing the publication backlog of Law Reports by leveraging AJUDATA meta-tagging, establishing a formal Archives Unit and involving National Focal Points to ensure that non-digital and remote users are not excluded from the judicial process. In this regard, AJUDATA and related digital tools will progressively support improved access to jurisprudence and institutional information in coordination with systems already operational within the Registry.

## **DEFINITION OF SUCCESS:**

51. For this strategic cycle, success is defined by achieving the following state by January 2029:
  - i. **Institutionalized Service Standards:** The Judicial Service Delivery and Legal Aid policies are fully operational, featuring established service focal points and a framework for consistent compliance with internal quality benchmarks. This structure ensures that service standards are systematically monitored and refined to meet the Court's evolving operational needs.
  - ii. **Universal Informational Access:** The Court will implement a phased approach to multilingual accessibility, prioritizing the synchronization of the Annual Law Report series and Case Summaries across all six AU working languages. The Manual on Procedures and thematic Practice Guides will be subject to graduated availability, with foundational versions finalized in 2026 and progressive translation into Kiswahili and Spanish scheduled for the 2027–2028 period to account for the recent adoption of these languages and current resource constraints.
  - iii. **Proactive and Diverse Legal Aid:** A sustainable, practical training model for counsel is established, and the Legal Aid Scheme continues to cover all deserving applicants.
  - iv. **Professionalized Archives:** A dedicated Archives Unit is established to preserve institutional memory in a permanent structure. The Court will aim for a progressive, year-on-year increase in the volume of decisions uploaded to the AU Common Repository. This growth will be supported by a technical alignment strategy between the Documentation, IT, and Webmaster Units to address current staffing and processing constraints.
  - v. **Equity in Access:** A formal user feedback mechanism is operational, confirming that non-digital users, persons with disabilities, and remote litigants

are effectively supported. This is achieved through the dissemination of simplified procedural kits and targeted Registry outreach, leveraging Legal Aid clinics and civil society partnerships to ensure inclusive participation in the Court's proceedings.

- vi. **Digital Transparency:** AJUDATA progressively supports internal and external case tracking, access to jurisprudence, legal research and selected monitoring and informational functions in coordination with existing Registry systems and digital platforms.

#### **KEY ANNUAL PERFORMANCE TARGETS (2026–2028):**

52. Progress toward improved accessibility will be monitored through the following key annual targets:

- i. **Policy Finalization:** Progressive implementation of the Revised Legal Aid Policy and finalisation, adoption and dissemination of the Judicial Service Delivery Policy and Manual on Procedures before the Court.
- ii. **Accelerated Publication:** Implementation of a strategy to systematically reduce the interval between the conclusion of a judicial year and the publication of the corresponding Law Report volume. The Court will aim for a progressive reduction of this publication lag, transitioning toward a streamlined editorial workflow that supports the quarterly transmission of finalized decisions to the AU Common Repository.
- iii. **Counsel Training Pivot:** Annual organisation of practical, case-simulated (virtual) training for counsel, targeting regional and gender diversity.
- iv. **Legal Aid Monitoring:** Annual increase of legal aid cases evaluated using the adopted Quality Assessment Tool to ensure effective representation.
- v. **Digital Transparency:** Progressive year-on-year increase in the synchronization of website content and FAQ sections across all principal working languages taking into account available resources and translation capacity.
- vi. **Feedback Integration:** Increase in user-satisfaction following the inaugural 2027 User Feedback Survey.
- vii. **Archive Digitization:** Annual increase of digitization of administrative and non-judicial archives.

#### **STRATEGIC INTERVENTIONS:**

53. The following phased interventions represent the roadmap for transforming the Court's accessibility:

## 2026

- i. **Policy and Operationalization:** Finalize the adoption and implementation of the Judicial Service Delivery Policy and the Legal Aid Policy to establish the Court's primary auditable service standards.
- ii. **Data and Tracking Implementation:** Develop internal digital monitoring tools, including through AJUDATA where appropriate, to support the collection and analysis of data relating to e-filing rates and legal aid utilization
- iii. **Law Report Catch-up:** Implement a systematic strategy to reduce the publication lag of the Law Report series and transition toward a quarterly transmission cycle for the AU Common Repository. This intervention focuses on streamlining editorial workflows and prioritizing the backlog of judicial decisions for final publication.
- iv. **Roster Diversity Drive:** Proactively target female counsel and North African applicants to improve regional and gender diversity on the counsel roster.
- v. **Linguistic Service Mobilization:** Operationalize the Language Policy and the Roster for Freelance Legal Professionals to support the transition to a six-language system and manage the translation backlog for judicial and administrative records.

## 2027

- i. **User Feedback Integration:** Implement the first regular, formal feedback mechanism (e.g., surveys) to obtain feedback on user demographics and satisfaction with Court programs.
- ii. **Activation of AJUDATA and other digital tools for Public Access:** Continuing on the enhanced operationalization of AJUDATA and other digital tools, roll out the public-facing interface of the AJUDATA and other digital platforms. This will include specialized sensitization sessions for bar associations, law societies, law schools, and CSOs to ensure the databases effectively serve as a transparent gateway to African human rights jurisprudence.
- iii. **Shared Responsibility for Outreach:** Leverage National Focal Points to develop simplified procedural kits and how-to guides specifically for self-represented and non-digital litigants.
- iv. **Practice Guide Production:** Prioritize and produce the first set of Practice Guides on specific rights, leveraging the completed preparatory work.
- v. **Advocacy for Operationalization of Legal Aid Fund:** Transition to a structured joint-organ strategy to secure the appointment of the AU Legal Aid Fund Board of Trustees.

## 2028

- i. **Accessibility Compliance Audit:** Conduct a comprehensive audit of the Court's physical and digital infrastructure to ensure that users with disabilities are fully supported.
- i. **Archives Unit Establishment:** Secure funding and finalize the recruitment or upgrade path for a dedicated Archivist to establish a formal Archives Unit, ensuring long-term synergy with the AU Archives.
- ii. **Institutionalized Quality Control:** Establish a formal policy for the consistent monitoring and evaluation of counsel services, including regular engagement with bar associations and law societies.
- iii. **Beneficiary Feedback Loop:** Systematically engage with legal aid beneficiaries to evaluate the quality of services and ensure the scheme remains user- focused.
- iv. **Advanced Enhancement of AJUDATA and other digital tools:** **Progressively** integrate the citation tracking database into AJUDATA and other digital platforms and add advanced export functionalities for legal researchers.
- v. **Public Education Campaign:** Develop visually engaging infographics and educational campaigns to simplify complex legal procedures for a wide audience.
- vi. **Policy Review Cycle:** Conduct the first biennial review of the Judicial Service Delivery and Legal Aid policies to ensure they remain responsive to user needs and technological advancements.
- vii. **Strategic Resource Review:** Evaluate the impact of ring-fenced funding on the reduction of the Law Report and translation backlogs to inform the next budgetary cycle.

## OUTPUT 1.4: EXPANDED USE OF THE AMICABLE SETTLEMENT PROCEDURE

54. The amicable settlement procedure is a restorative form of alternative dispute resolution where parties voluntarily resolve their dispute through dialogue either on their own or under the auspices of the Court. By allowing parties to negotiate their own terms, this procedure often leads to higher compliance rates by Respondent States. Given the socio-economic context of the continent, the Court seeks to strengthen the institutional framework supporting amicable settlement as an additional means of resolving disputes and addressing underlying human and social repercussions beyond purely legal claims. The realization of this output embodies the principle of shared responsibility, shifting the focus from adversarial litigation to collaborative problem-solving. Its success is strictly contingent upon the good faith and proactive engagement of litigants, state counsel, bar associations and law societies to prioritize mediated outcomes that offer sustainable, restorative justice over protracted legal conflict. In this regard, the Court's role is to facilitate, encourage and provide an enabling procedural framework for amicable settlement where appropriate.

### **BASELINE (DECEMBER 2025):**

55. As of 31 December 2025, the Court has established the foundational legal framework for alternative dispute resolution but has yet to achieve operational impact:
- i. **Policy Foundation:** The pioneering Guidelines on Amicable Settlement were adopted in June 2025, providing comprehensive guidance to enhance usage of this procedure.
  - ii. **Resolution Rate:** The historical resolution rate stands at 0%.
  - iii. **Proposal Rate:** Amicable settlement was proposed in only 2% of contentious cases, indicating a need for more systematic judicial engagement.
  - iv. **Internal Capacity:** Registry staff were successfully trained in Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) in 2023, though training for Judges and Registrars and Roster Counsel remains pending.
  - v. **Operational Readiness:** Technical drafting for the Internal Manual, SOPs, the External Practice Guide, and standardized formats for the amicable settlement process is complete. Institutional validation and final adoption remain pending to ensure these tools are fully integrated into the Registry's workflow.

### **STRATEGIC FOCUS:**

56. The Court will prioritize operationalization of the amicable settlement procedure to transition from policy development to active case resolution. The focus is on institutionalizing a proactive proposal mandate where the Court systematically identifies suitable cases for ADR at an early stage. This includes finalizing operational tools and launching a targeted communication strategy to overcome parties' reluctance by emphasizing the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of

negotiated settlements. The strategy recognizes that the successful conclusion of settlements depends entirely on the voluntary participation and agreement of the parties concerned

## **DEFINITION OF SUCCESS:**

57. For this strategic cycle, success is defined by achieving the following state by January 2029:

- i. **Functional ADR Framework:** The Amicable Settlement Manual and SOPs are fully operational, ensuring consistent application of procedural safeguards and fixed deadlines.
- ii. **Systematic Proposals:** Amicable settlement is systematically considered and proposed to parties in all eligible contentious applications.
- iii. **Supporting Willing Parties on Amicable Settlement:** Supporting the facilitation of amicable settlement processes in matters where parties voluntarily elect to engage in such procedures
- iv. **Trained Judicial and Legal Community:** All Judges and a year-on-year increase of Counsel on the Court's Legal Aid Roster are trained in the Court's specific ADR procedures and restorative justice techniques.
- v. **Restorative Impact:** Where amicable settlements are concluded, the Court promotes remedial approaches aimed at addressing the human and social dimensions of disputes.
- vi. **Specialized ADR Roster:** A vetted roster is available of external human rights mediators and experts who can assist in building capacity of other legal practitioners on the Court's amicable settlements procedures.

## **KEY ANNUAL PERFORMANCE TARGETS (2026–2028):**

58. To achieve this vision, the Court will monitor its progress against the following key annual targets:

- i. **Operational Finalization:** Progressive adoption and implementation of the Amicable Settlement Internal Manual, SOPs and the External Practice Guide.
- ii. **Systematic Facilitation of Amicable Settlement:** Implement the Amicable Settlement Guidelines (2025) to ensure that the option for amicable settlement is proactively presented and explained to parties at the earliest eligible stage of every proceeding.
- iii. **Resolution Milestone:** Increase institutional capacity and facilitation efforts relating to amicable settlement procedures in eligible cases, while recognizing that settlement outcomes remain dependent on the willingness of the parties.

- iv. **Training Coverage:** Conduct biennial virtual training sessions for Judges and Counsel to ensure a progressive increase in the number of practitioners effectively trained in the Court's procedures.

## **STRATEGIC INTERVENTIONS:**

59. The following phased interventions represent the roadmap for expanding the use of amicable settlements:

### **2026**

- i. **Operational Tools Finalization:** Expedite the adoption and implementation of the Amicable Settlement Manual and SOPs to provide the Registry with a clear functional roadmap. These tools will incorporate standardized templates for the settlement process and specialized formats for judgments on amicable settlement, ensuring consistency with the Amicable Settlement Guidelines (2025).
- ii. **Proactive Proposal Mandate:** Implement a Registry-level SOP to systematically screen and propose amicable settlement in all eligible contentious applications upon receipt.

### **2027**

- i. **Practice Guide Launch:** Finalize and publish the Amicable Settlement Practice Guide, emphasizing the benefits of speed, affordability and restorative remedies.
- ii. **Tailored Training Development:** Prioritize the development of customized training materials based on the Court's specific Guidelines, including simulated case files reflecting the Court's jurisprudence.
- iii. **Roster Counsel Training:** Organize interactive workshops and simulations for Roster Counsel, focusing on negotiation techniques and the specific requirements of human rights settlements.
- iv. **Judicial Alignment Retreat:** Organize a dedicated judicial retreat for all Judges to review the Guidelines, the Amicable Settlement Manual, SOPs, the expanded role of the Judge-Rapporteur and criteria for proposing ADR.
- v. **Metric Integration:** Improve internal documentation and monitoring of amicable settlement processes and related institutional trends through existing digital platforms, including AJUDATA.
- vi. **Restorative Pilot Projects:** Actively utilize the Guidelines to explore therapeutic or problem-solving approaches in suitable cases, specifically addressing indigenous or community rights.

- vii. **Respondent State Outreach:** Develop targeted outreach materials for bar associations, law societies and Ministries of Justice to address the current reluctance of States to engage in ADR.
- viii. **External Expert Roster:** Finalize the creation and operationalize a vetted roster of external mediators and human rights experts to provide technical support and build capacity for legal practitioners on the Court's amicable settlement procedures.

## 2028

- i. **Annual ADR Advocacy Report:** Publish a public report highlighting initiatives undertaken towards amicable settlement whether successful or otherwise to build public trust and broaden understanding of the Court's ADR capacity.
- ii. **Biennial Policy Review:** Conduct the first formal review of the Amicable Settlement Guidelines and SOPs to assess effectiveness based on resolution data and stakeholder feedback.
- iii. **Regional Integration:** Explore avenues for integrating the Court's amicable settlement procedures into university legal education curricula and bar association/law society legal training curricula.
- iv. **Legislative Review:** Conduct a study to identify any necessary amendments to the Rules of Court required to further streamline the amicable settlement procedure, based on lessons learned from the first three years of operational implementation of the Amicable Settlement Guidelines (2025).

## OUTPUT 1.5: INCREASED COMPLIANCE WITH THE COURT'S DECISIONS

60. A judicial decision only fulfils its true purpose when it results in a tangible remedy for the victim. The effectiveness of the African human rights system is measured not by the number of judgments issued, but by the extent to which they are executed at the domestic level. During this strategic cycle, the Court will focus on strengthening measures within its mandate aimed at supporting implementation through monitoring, reporting, judicial dialogue, stakeholder engagement and awareness raising initiatives. The realization of this output is the ultimate expression of shared responsibility. While the Court provides the specialized judicial monitoring regime, the translation of reparation orders into real-world change is strictly contingent upon the political and legal will of Member States, the proactive oversight of AU Policy Organs and the technical coordination of National Focal Points.

### BASELINE (DECEMBER 2025):

61. As of 31 December 2025, the Court has established a comprehensive judicial compliance monitoring architecture but continues to face a significant execution gap:
- i. **Compliance Architecture:** The Implementation and Compliance Monitoring Unit within the Registry was operationalized in 2023 and a new Framework for Reporting on Compliance was adopted by the Plenary in 2025.
  - ii. **Compliance Rates:** The rate of full implementation stands at 2% (2 out of 104 cases), with 10% partial implementation and a critical 88% non-reporting rate from State Parties.
  - iii. **Judicial Oversight:** The Country Judge-Rapporteur (JR) mechanism is active, and the Court successfully finalized its first formal compliance hearing in 2025.
  - iv. **Digital Infrastructure:** The SIDAC implementation database is technically established and integrated into the AJUDATA system, currently managing 586 reparation orders.
  - v. **Policy Gaps:** While the Framework is adopted, the administrative Manual, SOPs and standardized implementation reporting templates for States are pending finalization.
  - vi. **Capacity Constraints:** The Implementation and Compliance Monitoring Unit faces grave capacity gaps and a lack of a permanent core-funded staffing structure, hindering intensive diplomatic and technical follow-up.

### STRATEGIC FOCUS:

62. The Court will prioritize the proactive pursuit of State compliance by transitioning to a specialized post-judicial monitoring model. The focus is on protecting the Implementation and Compliance Monitoring Unit's mandate to ensure exclusive focus on the compliance cycle, thereby avoiding administrative dilution. This

includes the official public launch of the implementation database within AJUDATA, the systematic use of country-based compliance hearings, and the deployment of standardized reporting templates to address the 88% non-reporting bottleneck. The Court will leverage data-driven advocacy to ensure that compliance remains a standing priority for AU Member States and Policy Organs, reflecting the principle of shared responsibility.

## DEFINITION OF SUCCESS:

63. For this strategic cycle, success is defined by achieving the following state by January 2029:

- i. **Specialized Compliance Regime:** A fully staffed and permanent Implementation and Compliance Monitoring Unit is operational, focused exclusively on the post-judicial cycle and the support of Country Judge-Rapporteurs for Compliance.
- ii. **Targeted Compliance Growth:** The Court achieves a measurable year-on-year increase in the frequency and depth of compliance monitoring reports and stakeholder engagement initiatives.
- iii. **Data-Driven Accountability:** The AJUDATA implementation portal is public-facing and provides real-time, searchable data on the execution status of all reparation orders for use by stakeholders and AU Organs.
- iv. **Institutionalized Judicial Diplomacy:** Compliance hearings are established as a regular, country-based procedural standard, ensuring direct judicial engagement with State Parties on implementation obstacles.
- v. **Harmonized Continental Reporting:** A common reporting format is adopted in coordination with the ACHPR and ACERWC, reducing reporting fatigue for Member States and streamlining the African human rights system.
- vi. **Institutionalised National Focal Points:** The National Focal Point mechanism is fully operationalized with standardized engagement protocols adopted by all participating Member States.
- vii. **Technical Advisory Framework:** A formal process is functional, leveraging Registry expertise to provide Member States with technical guidance on the legal parameters required for the domestic execution of Court decisions.

## KEY ANNUAL PERFORMANCE TARGETS (2026–2028):

64. Progress toward attained compliance will be monitored through the following key annual targets:

- i. **Unit Stabilization:** Progressive recruitment of a permanent Head of Unit and core support staff.

- ii. **Operational Tools:** Gradually finalise and annually review critical internal Unit tools (SOPs, Manual, standardized reporting templates).
- iii. **Reporting Breakthrough:** Maximize the reach of standardized implementation reporting templates and conduct regular outreach to reduce non-reporting barriers.
- iv. **Compliance Monitoring and Reporting:** Achieve a year-on-year increase in the systematic tracking and reporting of judgment implementation. This focuses on the consistent filing of compliance reports and the proactive engagement with States to facilitate the full or partial implementation of the Court's decisions.
- v. **Compliance Hearing Frequency:** Regularly organise country-based compliance hearings to review the status of pending reparations, subject to available resources and judicial scheduling.
- vi. **Reparation Consistency:** Conduct, where necessary a review of the Reparation Guidelines to ensure orders remain specific, actionable and commensurate with domestic legal frameworks.
- vii. **Impact Mapping:** Achieve an annual increase of the upload rate of implementation data to AJUDATA, including impact mapping of legislative and policy reforms triggered by Court decisions.
- viii. **National Focal Point Operationalization:** Enhance the functional capacity of the National Focal Point mechanism by establishing standardized engagement protocols and regular briefing cycles. This ensures that NFPs transition from nominal appointments to active institutional liaisons capable of facilitating the Court's communication and implementation efforts within their respective States.

## STRATEGIC INTERVENTIONS:

65. The following phased interventions represent the roadmap for ensuring the execution of Court decisions:

### 2026

- i. **Transition Framework to Manual:** Finalize and formally issue the internal Implementation Manual and SOPs derived from the adopted Framework for Reporting on Compliance, to standardize the administrative workflow for compliance tracking and hearing preparation.
- ii. **Specialized Mandate Realignment:** Institutionalize the operational independence of the Implementation and Compliance Monitoring Unit by ensuring its exclusive focus on post-judicial follow-up and monitoring. This includes the formal separation of its functions from the primary case management workflow to enhance the Court's capacity to track the execution of its decisions.

- iii. **Standardized Reporting Rollout:** Finalize and publish standardized implementation reporting templates for States, Applicants, NHRIs as well as other credible sources to address the compliance data deficit.
- iv. **AJUDATA Implementation Portal:** Finalize the technical transition and officially launch the public-facing implementation database within the AJUDATA ecosystem.
- v. **Judges Rapporteur Strategic Briefing:** Deploy tailored country-compliance briefs for the Country Judge-Rapporteurs for Compliance, leveraging SIDAC data to support targeted judicial follow-up and diplomatic engagement.
- vi. **National Focal Point Reactivation and Evaluation:** Initiate a structured engagement cycle with the National Focal Point mechanism to revitalize the framework and empirically identify operational barriers. This proactive engagement will serve as the assessment framework for a comprehensive evaluation, bridging gaps in state level engagement and institutionalizing regular coordination.
- vii. **Standardize Language Access for Implementation:** Prioritize translation of decisions with active implementation components are accessible to all relevant national authorities and stakeholders in required languages.

## 2027

- i. **Promote Political Monitoring:** Drive the adoption of the proposals to centralize technical implementation support within the AUC and further institutionalize the political monitoring of implementation of the Court's decisions within the AU PRC Sub-Committee on Democracy, Governance and Human Rights, the STC on Justice and Legal Affairs and the Executive Council.
- ii. **AU Human Rights Organs Joint Reporting Initiative:** Lead a tripartite effort with the ACHPR and ACERWC to develop and adopt a Common Reporting Format for human rights monitoring. While designed to eventually integrate into wider AGA-APSA frameworks, this initiative ensures that the primary human rights bodies provide immediate, unified leadership in harmonizing state reporting and implementation tracking.
- iii. **Reparations Impact Review:** Initiate a phased assessment of selected previous reparation orders to identify factors influencing their domestic executability. This review will focus on developing a refined typology of remedial orders that are operationally realistic and better aligned with the domestic legal frameworks of State Parties, ensuring the workload remains within current institutional capacity.
- iv. **High-Level Advocacy Dossiers:** Systematically prepare strategic non-compliance dossiers for the Bureau and the Registrar to engage the AU PRC Sub-Committee on Democracy, Governance and Human Rights, the STC on Justice and Legal Affairs and the Executive Council, during dedicated monitoring sessions.

- v. **Targeted Strategy for AGA-APSA Platform Members:** Implement a targeted strategy to encourage other AGA-APSA platform members to provide technical assistance and capacity building to States for implementing thematic decisions.
- vi. **Judicial Technical Advisory Support:** Establish a formal framework for providing specialized technical advice to Member States, upon their request, regarding the judicial requirements for the execution of Court judgments. This mechanism will complement existing efforts by the PAP and NHRIs, leveraging the Registry's expertise to clarify the specific legal remedial outcomes required for effective domestic implementation.
- vii. **Legislative Advocacy:** Partner with the Pan-African Parliament to ensure the Model Law on Implementation is aligned with the Court's Protocol and adopted as a template for Member States.
- viii. **Executive Council Compliance Study:** Finalize and present the Executive Council mandated Study on the State of Compliance with Decisions of AU Human Rights Bodies and begin institutionalizing its recommendations across the AU system.

## 2028

- i. **Advanced Impact Mapping:** Expand the SIDAC database within AJUDATA to document the long-term influence of decisions on jurisprudence, national laws, policy shifts and societal change across the continent.
- ii. **Stakeholder Cooperation Strategy:** Operationalize a formal cooperation framework by leveraging existing platforms, such as the NANHRI and the African Court Coalition Stakeholders Forum, to build a continental coalition for compliance verification. This approach emphasizes shared responsibility and utilizes established networks to enhance the systematic monitoring of the Court's decisions without duplicating existing institutional efforts.
- iii. **Implementation of the Executive Council Compliance Study:** Institutionalize the recommendations from the Executive Council Study on the State of Compliance within the Court's own processes. This includes active participation in Union level efforts to harmonize compliance tracking across the African human rights system, ensuring the Court's monitoring mechanisms align with the broader AU strategic objectives.
- iv. **Operationalization of the Tripartite Compliance Database:** Support the operationalization of a unified tracking mechanism and joint database with the ACHPR and ACERWC to harmonize post-judicial follow-up and monitoring. By leveraging existing AGA-APSA initiatives, this tripartite approach streamlines the tracking of human rights outcomes and eliminates reporting fatigue for Member States through a single, coordinated monitoring interface.

### **3.2 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2: ENHANCED OUTREACH AND COOPERATION**

66. The Court's decisions achieve their full potential only when they are known, understood and integrated into the broader continental legal fabric. This objective focuses on the *impact* of the Court's work, moving beyond the issuance of judgments to ensure they resonate within national legal systems and the public consciousness. By prioritizing high-level judicial diplomacy and technical alliances, the Court seeks to reverse jurisdictional contraction and transform formal partnerships into active channels for justice.
67. The following two strategic outputs represent a critical move toward a mission-driven engagement framework. This approach focuses on humanizing jurisprudence through victim-centred storytelling, institutionalizing a permanent African judicial network and eliminating the dormancy in case referrals between AU human rights bodies. In line with the principle of shared responsibility, the Court's impact is treated as a collective outcome, requiring the coordinated efforts of Member States, national judiciaries, NHRIs, AGA-APSA Platform Members, civil society, academia, the media, the private sector and international partners to ensure that the rule of law is not merely declared but deeply felt across the continent.

## OUTPUT 2.1: CREATED GREATER AWARENESS ABOUT THE AFRICAN COURT

68. As a continental court, the African Court plays a vital role in fostering legal integration and establishing a rule of law that serves as the foundation for sustainable peace and development. If the Court does not invest sufficient resources in communicating its work, its impact on the human rights landscape remains limited. Furthermore, inadequate information management risks creating misunderstandings among the media and the public, potentially leading to institutional resistance. The realization of this output focuses on humanizing the Court's jurisprudence through a shared responsibility approach. By transforming AU Member States, national, regional and other international judicial bodies, AGA-APSA Platform Members, bar associations, law societies and civil society into active partners, the Court ensures that its mandate is not merely broadcast, but is deeply integrated into the continental legal consciousness.

### BASELINE (DECEMBER 2025):

69. As of 31 December 2025, the Court has demonstrated high operational resilience despite a volatile political landscape and significant jurisdictional contraction:
- i. **Jurisdictional Reach:** 34 AU Member States have ratified the Protocol (62%); however, five State Parties' withdrawals of the Article 34(6) Declaration have reduced the number of the Declarations in effect to 7, significantly limiting direct access for individuals and NGOs.
  - ii. **Intake Trends:** The Court experienced a profound drop in new litigation, receiving only 57 cases over the 2021–2025 period or in other words, an average of less than 12 new cases per year during the reporting period, highlighting a direct correlation with the withdrawals of the Declarations.
  - iii. **Digital Visibility:** The Court successfully scaled its digital reach, achieving a peak of 14,000 monthly website visitors in the final quarter of 2025, surpassing the 10,000-visitor target.
  - iv. **Outreach Activity:** The Registry executed 53 sensitization missions in 37 host states between 2010 and 2025; however, over a dozen Member States annually fail to respond to mission invitation requests, indicating a persistent gap in political willingness to engage.
  - v. **Knowledge Readiness:** Technical content and curriculum design for two Massive Open Online Courses (for judiciaries and for various publics) are complete, but the public launch was deferred due to technical and resource gaps.
  - vi. **Policy Infrastructure:** Foundational research for the Sensitization Manual and the Media Monitoring Project is technically complete, providing a methodological basis for future outreach.

## STRATEGIC FOCUS:

70. The Court will prioritize a high-level judicial diplomacy initiative to restore and expand its jurisdictional reach, specifically targeting the reversal of Article 34(6) withdrawals. The focus is on transitioning from general awareness-raising to targeted engagement through the formal adoption of the revised Communication Strategy, Sensitization Manual and the launch of the developed Online Courses. The Court will leverage its strong digital momentum to humanize its jurisprudence, sharing human interest stories of victims who received redress, to connect legal work with real-world outcomes and build public trust across all AU working languages, with a prioritized focus on enhancing accessibility in Portuguese, Arabic, Kiswahili and Spanish.

## DEFINITION OF SUCCESS:

71. For this strategic cycle, success is defined by achieving the following state by January 2029:
  - i. **Enhanced Jurisdictional Advocacy:** A sustained high-level judicial diplomacy and advocacy strategy is adopted and implemented to support increased awareness and engagement regarding Protocol ratifications and deposit of Article 34(6) Declarations among AU Member States, engagement through amicus briefs and interventions and the advisory jurisdiction of the Court
  - ii. **Operationalized Outreach SOPs:** The Sensitization Manual and a regularly reviewed Communication Strategy are fully institutionalized, ensuring the systematic application of outreach best practices.
  - iii. **Educational Impact:** The two Online Courses are fully operational and actively promoted for use by national judicial training institutes, universities, bar associations and law societies so as to reach a diverse continental audience.
  - iv. **Searchable Digital Jurisprudence:** AJUDATA is progressively enhanced as the Court's central jurisprudential database including thematic searchable-text functionality and the maintenance of a verified stakeholder network database
  - v. **Institutionalized Media Relations:** An African network of judicial/legal journalists is functional, accurately translating complex judicial outcomes into public-facing awareness.

## KEY ANNUAL PERFORMANCE TARGETS (2026–2028):

72. Progress toward greater awareness and jurisdictional expansion will be monitored through the following key annual targets:
  - i. **Diplomatic Milestones:** Achieve an annual increase in targeted judicial diplomacy engagements and the dissemination of ratification kits and follow-up initiatives with Member States concerning the Court's jurisdictional framework.

- ii. **Educational Reach:** Achieve a year-on-year increase in the number of participants successfully completing the Court's Online Courses.
- iii. **Digital Searchability:** Ensure an annual increase in the conversion of all picture-scan decisions in AJUDATA to searchable text and achieve a year-on-year increase in the number of features to enhance AJUDATA searchability.
- iv. **Network Expansion:** Achieve a year-on-year increase in the verified number of individuals and organizations within the stakeholder network database.
- v. **Visibility Metrics:** Achieve a year-on-year increase in the number of monthly website visitors and social media engagements.

## STRATEGIC INTERVENTIONS:

73. The following phased interventions represent the roadmap for creating greater awareness and restoring access:

### 2026

- i. **High-Level Judicial Diplomacy Initiative:** Launch a targeted Bureau-led strategy to engage states that have not yet ratified the Court's Protocol as well as engage the five states that withdrew their declarations and the states that have ratified but not yet deposited the Declaration,
- ii. **Adoption of the Sensitization Manual:** Finalize the Sensitization Manual to formalize operational procedures and identify key target groups for sustained follow-up.
- iii. **Launch of Online Courses:** Finalize technical partnerships and commit to a firm launch schedule for the Judiciary and Litigation online courses.
- iv. **Communication Strategy Review:** Review the Communication Strategy and adopt a new strategy to systematically address data from the Media Monitoring Project and humanize the Court's messaging based on clear content calendars.
- v. **20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary:** Capitalise on the series of 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary activities to systematise awareness raising initiatives about the Court's work, challenges and achievements.

### 2027

- i. **Advocacy Initiative:** Advocate for continued follow-up by the AUC Chairperson, in collaboration with the AUC OLC, to address outstanding ratifications of the Court's Protocol and deposit of Declarations, including developing standardized "Ratification Kits".
- ii. **AJUDATA Remediation Project:** Execute the technical project to convert all picture-scan decisions into searchable text and implement essential search filters for human rights violation types.

- iii. **Broadened Sensitization and Judicial Integration:** Expand the Court's sensitization mandate beyond the promotion of ratification to include the operationalization of partnerships with Supreme Courts, national Bar Associations, law schools, and NHRIs. This focus shifts from formal agreements to the execution of joint initiatives that facilitate the lateral implementation of decisions by embedding the Court's jurisprudence directly into national judicial practice, legal education, and domestic human rights monitoring.
- iv. **Quality Control for Yearbook:** Institute a revised internal editorial structure for the African Human Rights Yearbook to ensure regional and linguistic balance across all AU languages.
- v. **Enhanced Jurisdictional Visibility:** Develop purposeful social media content calendars focused on regularly explaining key jurisprudential developments and the real-world impact of the Court's decisions.
- vi. **Network of Judicial Journalists:** Promote the establishment and resourcing of a network of judicial journalists in Africa to capitalize on past media training and ensure professional coverage of legal issues on the continent.

## 2028

- i. **Humanizing the Jurisprudence:** Initiate the collection and publication of human-interest stories and victim testimonials to connect legal work to relatable real-world outcomes.
- ii. **Proactive Critique Management:** Develop robust internal and external communication strategies to anticipate and engage constructively with potential critiques voiced against the African Court, ensuring institutional resilience and better managing of public perception.
- i. **Systematic and Multilingual Jurisprudence Dissemination:** Ensure all outreach products, including tailored information packages, are proactively disseminated in all official languages of the Union, with a prioritized focus on Portuguese, Arabic, Kiswahili and Spanish. This targeted approach specifically addresses regional patterns of lower engagement and ensures that the Court's jurisprudence is accessible to all Member States and stakeholders across the continent.
- iii. **Judicial Education and Curricular Integration:** Collaborate with relevant actors on specialized educational resources, case-law modules, and context-appropriate courses to bar associations, law societies, judicial training institutes, and law schools to facilitate the integration of the African Court's jurisprudence and procedural practice into their professional and academic curricula.

## OUTPUT 2.2: IMPROVED COOPERATION WITH STAKEHOLDERS

- 74. The magnitude of human rights challenges in Africa requires holistic solutions that transcend individual institutional capacities. Protective gaps can only be closed

through value-added cooperation that avoids duplication and leverages the unique strengths of each stakeholder. This output serves as the primary vehicle for the theme of *Protecting Human Rights in Africa: A Shared Responsibility*. It recognizes that the Court's impact is fundamentally contingent upon a functional continental network where state institutions, national and regional judiciaries, NHRIs, AU/REC organs, civil society and international partners act as active co-guarantors of justice. By moving from ad hoc interactions to permanent technical alliances, the Court ensures that human rights protection is transformed from a series of isolated interventions into a durable and coordinated continental effort.

#### **BASELINE (DECEMBER 2025):**

75. As of 31 December 2025, the Court has established a robust cooperation framework but still faces significant obstacles in judicial referrals and domestic implementation:
  - i. **Continental Network:** The Court exceeded its partnership target with 38 Inter-Institutional Agreements (IIAs) and the designation of National Focal Points for the Court by 24 AU Member States. The Court has signed Memoranda of Understanding with apex Courts of AU Member States as follows: Cabo Verde, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mozambique and Sao Tome and Principe. The Court has signed Memoranda of Understanding with the Community Court of Justice of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Court of Justice of the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU Court)
  - ii. **Judicial Synergy and AGA-APSA Alignment:** The Court has established a permanent Tripartite Judicial Dialogue with the ECOWAS and EAC Courts, serving as a key implementing organ within the AGA-APSA framework. While the Court actively contributes to the AU-UN and AU-EU Human Rights strategies, the formal adoption of the African Judicial Network (AJN) Statute remains stalled at the AU policy organ level, limiting the systematic coordination of these judicial synergies.
  - iii. **Commission Referral Stagnation:** Despite the adoption of the Complementarity Roadmap (2022) and the Guidelines on Submission and Transfer of Cases, the African Commission submitted zero cases to the Court during the 2021–2025 cycle, and vice versa in terms of case transfers to the Commission, representing a critical failure in the functional synergy of the African human rights system.
  - iv. **NHRI Engagement:** A milestone MoU was concluded with the Network of African National Human Rights Institutions (NANHRI), providing a structured framework to encourage NHRIs to effectively utilize their roles as *amicus curiae* and domestic implementation monitors in accordance with the Rules of Court and the Protocol. This agreement streamlines coordination and technical exchange to bridge the gap between continental judicial decisions and national human rights oversight.

- v. **Technical Readiness:** The foundation for the 7th African Judicial Dialogue (2026) is complete, including the development of AJUDATA and the *State of the Judiciary in Africa Report* methodological framework.
- vi. **Global Judicial Standing:** The MoU with the European and Inter-American Courts was renewed, complemented by successful high-level exchanges with the International Court of Justice (ICJ). Furthermore, the Court has operationalized its engagement with the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) through participation in the Superior Courts Network, facilitating direct institutional exchange and access to comparative jurisprudence.

## STRATEGIC FOCUS:

76. The Court will prioritize converting its extensive network of formal alliances into active judicial referrals and consistent domestic compliance. The focus is on reversing the referral dormancy of the African Commission and operationalizing the NANHRI partnership to systematically channel high-impact cases to the Court and strengthen domestic implementation monitoring. The Court will transition the African Judicial Dialogue from an event-based model to a continuous technical exchange by launching the *State of the Judiciary in Africa Report* and the International Judges' Election Calendar. This includes leveraging the 2026 PRC Retreat to secure the political endorsement required for the AJN Statute and advocating for the designation of an AU Champion for Justice and Human Rights. The various Judicial Dialogue and Memoranda of Understanding with national and regional courts will be leveraged towards enhancing jurisprudence sharing and international judicial education through the Judiciary and Litigation online courses.

## DEFINITION OF SUCCESS:

77. For this strategic cycle, success is defined by achieving the following state by January 2029:
  - i. **Functional Complementarity:** The Commission-Court Guidelines on Submission and Transfer of Cases are fully operationalized through structured technical engagement, regular coordination mechanisms and strengthened referral facilitation processes between the Commission and the Court. Increased joint advocacy initiatives will have been undertaken with the ACERWC for amendment of the Court Protocol towards ACERWC having standing before the Court.
  - ii. **Operationalization and Advocacy for the African Judicial Network (AJN):** Conduct targeted advocacy to support the consideration and eventual adoption of the AJN Statute by the relevant AU Policy Organs. Pending the formal establishment of the Network, the Registry will support judicial exchanges within existing institutional and resource capacities and existing African Union Judicial Dialogue mechanisms and existing digital platforms.
  - iii. **Data-Driven Judicial Assessment:** The Registry finalises technical processes toward the publication of the inaugural State of the Judiciary in Africa Report, subject to resource availability and stakeholder cooperation

- iv. **Increased NHRI-led Engagement and Compliance Monitoring:** The NHRIs and NANHRI actively participate in the judicial cycle through increased engagement in amicus curiae participation, intervention, monitoring domestic implementation of decisions, sensitization initiatives and technical cooperation relating to the Commission-Court referral framework
- v. **Judicial Education Integration:** Conduct sustained advocacy and engagement with national judicial training institutes, bar associations, law societies and law schools to encourage the voluntary integration and use of the Judiciary and Litigation online courses within their respective training and professional development programmes.

#### **KEY ANNUAL PERFORMANCE TARGETS (2026–2028):**

78. Progress toward improved stakeholder cooperation will be monitored through the following key annual targets:
- i. **Commission Referral Engagement:** Institutionalize regular technical engagement and follow-up mechanisms with the African Commission to facilitate the operational use of the referral framework and Guidelines on Submission and Transfer of Cases.
  - ii. **Operationalization and Advocacy for the African Judicial Network (AJN):** Promote the formal adoption of the AJN Statute through targeted advocacy with AU Policy Organs while continuing the functional operationalization of the network under the auspices of the African Union Judicial Dialogue to facilitate ongoing judicial exchanges and capacity building among national judiciaries.
  - iii. **Partnership Activation and Impact:** Achieve an annual increase in the number of joint initiatives, collaborative training programs, and technical exchanges executed with national and regional courts, AGA-APSA Platform Members, national Bar Associations, law schools, and NHRIs. This shift prioritizes the operationalization of existing and new partnerships over the mere signature of formal agreements, ensuring that collaboration translates into tangible support for the Court's mandate.
  - iv. **National Focal Point Expansion and Engagement:** Sustain targeted engagement and advocacy initiatives aimed at increasing designation of and engagements with National Focal Point by AU Member States.
  - v. **Implementation Advocacy and Monitoring:** Institutionalize a systematic follow up mechanism to track and report on the implementation of MoUs, Inter-Institutional Agreements, and resolutions adopted during the AU Judicial Dialogues and Tripartite Judicial Dialogues. This includes ensuring that the Court's commitments within the International Human Rights Forums and the Joint AU-UN Human Rights Framework are effectively translated into the Registry's annual work plans and operational activities.

## STRATEGIC INTERVENTIONS:

79. The following phased interventions represent the roadmap for enhancing stakeholder cooperation:

### 2026

- i. **Commission Referral Dialogue:** Initiate a high-level technical dialogue with the ACHPR to identify and resolve the specific barriers preventing case referrals.
- ii. **PRC Strategic Retreat:** Execute the high-level retreat with the PRC to advocate for consideration of key pending issues, including outstanding Protocol Ratifications, Article 34(6) Declarations, the limited implementation of decisions, establishing an AU Champion for Justice and Human Rights, adopting the African Judicial Network (AJN) Statute and granting standing to the ACERWC.
- iii. **Operationalization of Tailored Engagement Strategies:** Implement the customized engagement strategies for NHRIs, law schools, Bar Associations, and NGOs as defined in the Communication Strategy and Sensitization Manual. This focus ensures that the Registry effectively utilizes the established frameworks and templates for Inter-Institutional Agreements (IIAs) to monitor and evaluate partnership outcomes across all key stakeholder groups.
- iv. **Organization of the 7th African Union Judicial Dialogue:** Subject to funding, organize the 7th African Union Judicial Dialogue and leverage the Dialogue for renewal and signature of Memoranda of Understanding with apex national courts and regional courts.
- v. **Operationalize Implementation Tracking:** Initiate implementation of the Tripartite and Complementarity Focal Point system and Joint Workplan established under the Tripartite Dialogue and the Complementarity Roadmap, respectively.
- vi. **Technical Support for NANHRI-led Engagement:** Collaborate with NANHRI in training initiatives focusing on the 2025 Commission-Court Guidelines on Submission and Transfer of Cases. This collaboration will also facilitate specialized sessions on the *amicus curiae* submission process and the Court's compliance reporting framework, leveraging NANHRI's network to strengthen the role of NHRIs in the African human rights system.
- vii. **Operationalize the AU-UN Joint Framework:** Develop a specific Registry-level roadmap to implement the judicial aspects of the 2023 AU-UN Human Rights Framework, focusing on technical assistance and joint capacity building.

- i. **National Jurisprudence Integration:** Prioritize functional collaboration with NHRIs, national Bar Associations, and Law Schools to embed the Court's jurisprudence into domestic legal training and professional development programs. This focus shifts from formal agreement signatures to the practical integration of the Court's decisions into national judicial practice and legal education, ensuring the lateral influence of the Court's mandate.
- ii. **Strategic Government Engagement through AU Organs:** Operationalize direct engagement with the executive branches of Member States by utilizing the forum of the STC on Justice and Legal Affairs as a primary channel for institutional dialogue. This approach expands the Court's outreach beyond the PRC to ensure regular technical feedback and sensitization, fostering a deeper understanding of the Court's mandate within national ministries of justice and legal affairs.
- iii. **Joint Optimization of the State Party Forum:** Establish a structured joint planning mechanism with the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights to co-design the institutionalized State Party Forum. This intervention formalizes the Court's role as a co-convener, ensuring that compliance challenges, the enforcement of judgments and the harmonization of jurisprudence are structurally integrated into the forum's agenda to deepen outward state engagement.
- iv. **International Judges' Election Calendar:** Launch the digital tool providing multi-year forecasts of judicial vacancies to empower national judiciaries in international judicial appointments.
- v. **Institutionalized PAP and Parliamentary Engagement:** Operationalize the Court-PAP MoU by institutionalizing an annual reporting mechanism to the Committee on Justice and Human Rights. In collaboration with the PAP, the Registry will develop and disseminate specialized briefing documents and summary reports tailored for national parliamentarians, supported by joint sensitization seminars focusing on the legislative measures required for the domestic enforcement of Court decisions.
- vi. **Online Course Integration Drive:** Launch a targeted advocacy campaign to secure the formal integration of the Judiciary Online Course into national judicial curricula.
- vii. **Support for Decentralized Judicial Training:** Provide technical support and expertise to National Judicial Training Institutes (JTIs) for the development of specialized modules and pilots targeting lower national courts. This collaboration shifts the lead responsibility for 'Mini-African Judicial Dialogues' and lower-court training to the JTIs, with the Registry ensuring that the content remains aligned with the Court's latest jurisprudence and international human rights standards.

- viii. **Operationalization of the Judicial Fellowship Program:** Implement the Judicial Fellowship program as provided for in the Court's Placement Policy, to broaden visibility and influence across the African judicial landscape. This will be through institutional secondments, professional exchanges and collaborative arrangements within existing interinstitutional agreements and available capacities ensuring the program serves as a sustainable mechanism for deepening the understanding of the Court's jurisprudence among legal professionals.
- ix. **Harmonization Advocacy:** Conduct targeted meetings with the ACHPR and ACERWC to harmonize evidence procedures (e.g., rules and practices on *amicus curiae*, examination of witnesses) and advocate for the harmonization of jurisprudence among AU human rights bodies.
- x. **Joint Sensitization Missions:** Plan and execute joint sensitization missions with the ACHPR and ACERWC to raise awareness of all three human rights mechanisms.
- xi. **Continental Alignment Initiative:** Launch targeted engagements to secure organ-specific IIAs/MoUs with AGA-APSA Platform Members (including APRM, AUABC, AUCIL, and the PSC) to identify technical synergies, avoid duplication of mandates, and establish a coordinated roadmap for human rights monitoring across the Union.
- xii. **Finalize Stakeholder Mapping:** Complete the comprehensive mapping project to identify and log all relevant bar associations, law societies, media houses, NGOs, NHRIs, universities and law schools to enable efficient and targeted dissemination of information about the African Court's work.
- xiii. **Operationalize or Formalize Staff Exchanges:** Building on existing staff exchange frameworks and MoUs, engage the ACHPR, ACERWC, the ECOWAS Court, the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR), the Inter-American Court of Human Rights (IACtHR) and WAEMU to explore opportunities for Staff Exchange and Sabbaticals arrangements, to deepen technical expertise and share good judicial practices.
- xiv. **Comprehensive Engagement with UN Special Procedures:** Conduct a systematic review of all UN thematic and country mandates to identify strategic entry points for cooperation. The Court should proactively engage with relevant Special Rapporteurs and Working Groups to align objectives, share regional jurisprudential insights and facilitate the participation of mandate holders in Court-led dialogues and research projects.
- xv. **Cooperation with ILC and AUCIL:** Institutionalize the Court's contribution to the progressive development of international law by establishing regular technical exchanges and submitting thematic briefings to the International Law Commission (ILC) and the African Union Commission on International Law (AUCIL). This focus ensures the Court's jurisprudence is systematically integrated into the drafting and codification efforts of these bodies.

- i. **Inaugural *State of the Judiciary in Africa Report* Publication:** Publish the first full *State of the Judiciary in Africa Report*, during the 8th African Union Judicial Dialogue, highlighting best practices and judicial performance benchmarks and identifying capacity-building opportunities.
- ii. **Participant Contribution Model:** Operationalize the first phase of the participant contribution model for the 8th African Union Judicial Dialogue to ensure financial sustainability.
- iii. **Joint Performance Reporting:** Publish the first joint performance report with the ACHPR and ACERWC on the implementation of the Complementarity Roadmap.
- iv. **Contribution to AU-EU Human Rights Dialogue:** Participate actively in the AU-EU human rights dialogue to ensure the Court's judicial mandate is a central feature of the bilateral relationship.
- v. **Contribution to UN-AU Joint Framework:** Fully integrate the Court's judicial activities into the UN-AU Joint Framework, positioning the Court as the lead judicial pillar for achieving its goals of prevention and protection.
- vi. **Institutionalize Global Judicial Data Sharing:** Explore technical avenues for the mutual integration or data sharing capacity between AJUDATA and the jurisprudence databases of global bodies to ensure African case law is systematically cited in international human rights scholarship and rulings.
- vii. **Sustain Academic Outreach:** Develop a sustainable program for guest lectures and presentations by Court Judges and Registry staff within university programmes to ensure continuous, high-level engagement and integration of the Court's work in academic curricula, building on the experience of the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrations.

### **3.3 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3: STRENGTHENED INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY**

80. An effective judicial system requires more than just legal expertise; it demands a robust and resilient organizational framework. This objective focuses on the operational core of the Court, ensuring that its human, digital, knowledge, material and financial resources are managed with the highest standards of professionalism and foresight. Central to this approach is the institutionalization of risk management protocols to anticipate and mitigate political, financial and technical disruptions. By prioritizing institutional health, proactive risk mitigation and technical innovation, the Court builds the autonomy necessary to fulfil its continental mandate without administrative or logistical interruption.
81. The following five strategic outputs represent a capitalisation on the Court's integrated institutional framework. This framework emphasizes the total well-being of the workforce, the full digitalization of the judicial chain, the preservation of institutional memory, and the pursuit of infrastructural and financial independence. In line with the principle of shared responsibility, these internal advancements are designed to create a self-sustaining environment where the Court's operational stability is secured through the coordinated support of the African Union Commission, Member States and Host State authorities.

### OUTPUT 3.1: DEVELOPED HUMAN RESOURCES

82. To protect human rights effectively, the Court must foster an organizational culture that prioritizes professional development, holistic well-being, and absolute security for its personnel. This strategic cycle focuses on transitioning from workforce stabilization to specialized care and institutional excellence. By implementing a robust wellness strategy in coordination with the AUC Medical and Health Services Directorate (MHSD), and institutionalizing a modernized security management system, the Court ensures its staff have the optimal conditions to fulfil their mandate. This output embodies the principle of shared responsibility, recognizing that the Court's ability to serve the continent is dependent on the sustained support of AU Policy Organs to provide the resources necessary to support the development of its human capital.

#### BASELINE (DECEMBER 2025):

83. As of 31 December 2025, the Court's human resources landscape reflects high technical readiness despite structural barriers and evolving wellness needs:
- i. **Workforce Stabilization:** The job occupancy rate stands at 75.56%, necessitating a focused strategy for continued advocacy and prioritization for the replacement of vacant budgeted posts.
  - ii. **Recruitment Transparency:** The Court has successfully transitioned to the Management Business Reporting System (MBRS) to enhance transparency and ensure a balance between institutional achievements and recruitment gaps, including the digitalization of applications for internships and placements.
  - iii. **Administrative Autonomy:** In accordance with the Protocol, the Court utilizes its established internal recruitment and selection committees to manage its human capital.
  - iv. **Recognition and Awards:** The Staff Award and Recognition Policy is operationalized to recognize notable individual and team achievements within specific cycles.
  - v. **Professional Advancement:** The establishment of a structured internal upgrade path, governed by the Staff Rules and Regulations (SRR) and relevant Promotion and Mobility Policies, remains a priority to ensure long-term career development.
  - vi. **Health and Wellness:** The Court is aligning with the AU-wide Wellness Policy led by the MHSD to address stress management and non-communicable diseases (NCDs).
  - vii. **Security Infrastructure:** The Security and Safety Unit (SSU) has initiated the formalization of its Security Operations Manual to move toward a permanent command and coordination structure.

- viii. **Placement Policy:** A new policy for interns, fellows, and researchers was adopted in 2024, though a comprehensive orientation manual for all categories of personnel remains in development.

## **STRATEGIC FOCUS:**

- 84. The Court will prioritize workforce stabilization through continued advocacy for the filling of budgeted vacancies. The focus is on implementing a bespoke Human Resources Development Strategy that balances institutional expertise with a "Healthy and Safe African Court Family" approach. Simultaneously, the Court will coordinate with the AUC MHSD to launch comprehensive wellness initiatives. Security will be formalized through an integrated management system—including technologies planned for the new premises—to protect personnel and assets.

## **DEFINITION OF SUCCESS:**

- 85. For this strategic cycle, success is defined by achieving the following state by January 2029:
  - i. **Workforce Stability:** Sustained advocacy for increase in the job occupancy rate, supported by a transparent internal upgrade path and the retention of institutional expertise.
  - ii. **Bespoke HR and Wellness Governance:** Full implementation of the Court-specific HR Development Strategy and a mental health framework featuring regular professional support and stress management.
  - iii. **Robust Security and Safety:** An operational integrated security system, featuring a finalized Operations Manual and standardized emergency response protocols.
  - iv. **Advanced Medical Care:** A fully equipped Court clinic utilizing an Electronic Health Care Management System (EHMS) and strengthened referral arrangements for specialized care facilitated through a regional medical board.
  - v. **Sustainable Talent Pipeline:** Functional collaborations with academic institutions to support externally funded internships and fellowships, complemented by a complete orientation manual.

## **KEY ANNUAL PERFORMANCE TARGETS (2026–2028):**

- 86. Progress toward developed human resources will be monitored through the following key annual targets:
  - i. **Job Occupancy Growth:** Undertake annual advocacy and recruitment processes aimed at progressively improving occupancy of approved budgeted positions
  - ii. **Wellness Benchmarks:** Achieve an annual increase in staff participation in MHSD-aligned wellness and stress management programs.

- iii. **Security Readiness:** Execute biannual emergency drills and achieve progressively 100% completion of security refresher courses.
- iv. **Policy Rollout:** Progressive adoption of the bespoke HR Development Strategy and SSU Operations Manual.
- v. **Managerial Accountability:** Annual increase in management staff undergoing 360-degree performance reviews including a well-being component.
- vi. **Onboarding Excellence:** Ensure new personnel participate in formal orientation training within their first quarter.

## **STRATEGIC INTERVENTIONS:**

87. The following phased interventions represent the roadmap for strengthening the Court's human and institutional capital:

### **2026**

- i. **Recruitment Drive:** Launch a targeted advocacy and recruitment process for the filling of vacant structural and budgeted positions, subject to approved budget and support provided by AU recruitment services
- ii. **Regional Medical Board:** Establish a regional medical board to enhance the referral system and ensure staff access to specialists.
- iii. **HR Strategy Adoption:** Finalize and implement the Court-specific HR Development Strategy in alignment with AU-wide policies.
- iv. **Wellness Baseline:** Conduct the inaugural mental health baseline assessment and establish the schedule for professional support and stress management.
- v. **SSU Command Stabilization:** Formally adopt the Security Operations Manual and institutionalize the command structure and shift management.
- vi. **Educational Partnerships:** Pursue collaborations with institutions to facilitate and support the stay of interns and fellows at the Court.

### **2027**

- i. **Systemic Monitoring and 360 Reviews:** Establish the framework for monitoring HR policies and institutionalize 360-degree reviews for management and staff.
- ii. **Orientation Manual Publication:** Finalize and publish the comprehensive orientation manual and SOPs for new Judges, staff, and volunteers.
- iii. **NCD Prevention:** Launch lifestyle modification strategies and ergonomic workstation improvements in coordination with medical experts.

- iv. **EHMS Implementation:** Transition the Court clinic to an Electronic Health Care Management System to ensure data-driven planning and confidentiality.

## 2028

- i. **Career Development Alignment:** Refine the recruitment and career development framework to ensure a transparent internal upgrade path is recognized.
- ii. **Evaluation of Interventions:** Implement a system for evaluating the effectiveness of technical training, mental health interventions, and competency development.
- iii. **Succession Planning:** Develop a multi-year talent planning framework to ensure institutional continuity for key leadership and technical roles.

## OUTPUT 3.2: OPTIMISED USE OF DIGITAL RESOURCES

88. The digital transformation of the Court is a strategic necessity that extends beyond mere technical support. For a continental judicial body, the optimization of digital resources is the primary means of ensuring business continuity, information security and global accessibility. While the previous cycle achieved functional successes in disaster recovery and remote workflows, the lack of consistent strategic governance hindered the completion of essential courtroom and e-court upgrades. This strategic period focuses on professionalizing IT governance and fully operationalizing the E-Court service to ensure the Court remains an innovative, data-secure institution. This output embodies the principle of shared responsibility by recognizing that digital justice relies on a high-performance partnership between the Court's technical infrastructure and the digital readiness of litigants, bar associations and national judiciaries.

### BASELINE (DECEMBER 2025):

89. As of 31 December 2025, the Court's digital infrastructure reflects a gap between functional resilience and strategic governance:
- i. **Governance Status:** The Court operates under the AU Wide IT Policy, which serves as the overarching regulatory framework for digital conduct and standards across the Union. However, this policy is yet to be localized to the specific judicial requirements of the Court. Furthermore, the internal IT Strategy—the roadmap for operationalizing these policies—was not formally reviewed during the 2021–2025 cycle, resulting in a gap between current digital infrastructure and evolving operational needs.
  - ii. **Business Continuity:** A robust disaster recovery site and cloud-based backup system are fully operational, significantly enhancing data security.
  - iii. **Workflow Efficiency:** DocuSign was successfully implemented, resulting in a modernized electronic document workflow and measurable paper reduction.
  - iv. **Cybersecurity:** A unified threat management system is in place, supported by awareness training for Judges and staff.
  - v. **Infrastructure Gaps:** Critical courtroom technology upgrades—including audio-video systems and specialized judicial software—remained stalled due to budgetary and strategic limitations.
  - vi. **Staffing and Training:** The IT Unit remains under-resourced due to recruitment delays for the IT Assistant, and technical training for E-Court management has been sporadic.

### STRATEGIC FOCUS:

90. The Court will prioritize the immediate review and alignment of its Information Technology Strategy to serve as a functional blueprint for the next three years. The focus is on the full operationalization of the African Court E-Court service, ensuring

that the Judges and relevant staff are equipped to enforce digital filing and case management standards. This includes advocating for the allocation of the necessary budget for high-definition courtroom technology upgrades, ensuring technical interoperability across all departmental platforms, and intensifying cybersecurity measures to protect the integrity of judicial records.

## **DEFINITION OF SUCCESS:**

91. For this strategic cycle, success is defined by achieving the following state by January 2029:

- i. **Institutionalized IT Governance:** The Court's IT Strategy is systematically reviewed and localized to align with the overarching AU-Wide IT Policy. This includes the establishment of a strict annual review cycle to ensure the digital roadmap remains responsive to the Court's evolving judicial and operational requirements.
- ii. **Unified Judicial Interface:** Prioritize the convergence of all judicial workflows—including e-filing, internal case management, and jurisprudence tracking—into a single, high performance digital environment. This strategy focuses on eliminating functional duplication by consolidating existing tools into a unified interface, thereby reducing long-term maintenance costs and ensuring a seamless, data driven judicial chain from filing to final publication.
- iii. **Advanced Courtroom Technology:** Technical plans and progressive upgrades for courtroom audio-visual and digital transcription systems are implemented, subject to available resources to facilitate high quality hybrid hearings. This infrastructure ensures real-time transcription and seamless multi-channel interpretation across all Union languages, enhancing the accessibility and record-keeping accuracy of judicial proceedings.
- iv. **Cyber Resilience:** A proactive cybersecurity framework is operational, featuring automated threat detection and 100% Judges and staff compliance with data protection protocols.
- v. **Systemic Digitalization:** All Court operating procedures are digitized and standardized, prioritizing user-centric interfaces, eliminating manual bottlenecks and ensuring cross-system compatibility.
- vi. **Optimized Support Capacity:** An IT Unit with progressively enhanced staffing and strengthened technical support capacity maintaining a high satisfaction rate for internal and external digital service delivery. An IT Unit with progressively enhanced staffing and strengthened technical support capacity

## **KEY ANNUAL PERFORMANCE TARGETS (2026–2028):**

92. Progress toward optimized digital resources will be monitored through the following key annual targets:

- i. **Strategy Alignment:** Progressively review and update the comprehensive IT Strategy.
- ii. **Digital Workflow Optimisation:** Achieve an annual increase in the integration and utilization of consolidated E-Court service components by the end of 2027. Progress will be measured by the successful migration of manual processes into the unified digital environment, focusing on cost-saving efficiencies and the elimination of redundant software maintenance
- iii. **Infrastructure Upgrade:** Gradually realise the scheduled audio-visual and software upgrades for the Courtroom.
- iv. **Cybersecurity Training:** Conduct regular cybersecurity and data integrity workshops for all Judges and staff.
- v. **Recruitment Milestone:** Progressively fill the IT Assistant position and any outstanding technical vacancies.
- vi. **Standardization:** Achieve year-on-year increase in software standardization across Judicial and Registry Staff.

#### **STRATEGIC INTERVENTIONS:**

93. The following phased interventions represent the roadmap for the Court's digital evolution:

#### **2026**

- i. **Strategy Review:** Conduct an immediate, participatory review of the IT Strategy to align digital investments with the 2026–2028 strategic goals.
- ii. **IT Workforce Stabilization:** Prioritize and advocate for expedited recruitment of the IT Assistant and establish a clear technical support hierarchy to improve response times.
- iii. **Cybersecurity Hardening:** Upgrade the unified threat management system and implement advanced multi-factor authentication for all judicial and administrative databases.
- iv. **Funded Technical Training:** Pursue resources allocation for specialized training on E-Court management, focusing on the Legal, Registry Office and Language Units to ensure operational enforcement.
- v. **Technical Assessment and Needs Analysis:** Conduct a comprehensive technical audit of existing courtroom audio-visual assets and develop the technical specifications for a modernized, hybrid-capable infrastructure. This ensures that the eventual overhaul is data-driven and precisely aligned with the Court's long-term digital strategy.

## 2027

- i. **AI and Emerging Tech Assessment:** Conduct a feasibility study on the ethical use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) for legal research and automated transcription within the Court.
- ii. **Budgetary Lobbying and Technical Integration:** Initiate the budgetary lobbying process for the 2028 cycle by finalizing the cost-benefit analysis and technical integration plans. This phase focuses on advocating for the necessary AU policy organ approvals by demonstrating how the courtroom upgrade supports the broader goal of judicial transparency and accessibility.
- iii. **Technical Integration of E-Court Components:** Operationalize the remaining components of the E-Court system and ensure seamless integration with the AJUDATA portal.
- iv. **Software Harmonization:** Complete the standardization of all software packages and acquisition protocols to ensure system consistency and compatibility.
- v. **Digital Archives (E-Documentation):** Launch the systematic digitization and indexing of all historical court files to ensure long-term data integrity and retrieval accuracy.

## 2028

- i. **Systemic Digitalization Audit:** Review and digitize all remaining manual operating procedures to ensure a completely paperless administrative environment.
- ii. **Long-Term Asset Lifecycle Management:** Implement a formal maintenance and replacement policy for all IT and communication hardware to avoid technological obsolescence.
- iii. **Public Digital Interface Enhancement:** Optimize the Court website and public portals for mobile accessibility and multi-language synchronization across all AU working languages.
- iv. **Execution of the Courtroom Technology Overhaul:** Secure the allocated budget and prepare for the phased execution of the technical upgrade of courtroom audio, video, and live-streaming infrastructure. This phase will prioritize the installation of digital transcription systems and multi-channel interpretation tools to facilitate high-quality hybrid hearings and ensure a permanent, searchable digital record of proceedings.

### OUTPUT 3.3: IMPROVED KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

94. The Court is a learning organization committed to the systematic development, acquisition, and sharing of judicial and administrative knowledge. For a continental court, knowledge management is a strategic pillar that ensures jurisprudential consistency and institutional memory. While the previous cycle achieved a landmark 97% digitization rate for judicial files, the architectural gap between data storage and accessibility persists. This strategic period focuses on institutionalizing a knowledge-driven culture where research and documentation are seamlessly integrated into the Court's operations. This output fulfils the principle of shared responsibility by transforming the Court's non-confidential internal archives into a public-facing continental repository. By strictly adhering to data protection and confidentiality protocols, the Court ensures that its public knowledge assets support the development of African human rights law as a collaborative endeavour involving National Focal Points, academic partners, the media, and national and regional judicial bodies.

#### **BASELINE (DECEMBER 2025):**

95. As of 31 December 2025, the Court possesses a wealth of digital assets but lacks the unified architecture required for effective knowledge retrieval:
- i. **Judicial Digitization Success:** The Court achieved a 97% digitization rate for all judicial case files since 2008, significantly improving data security and long-term preservation.
  - ii. **Institutional Digitization Gap:** Conversely, the digitization of institutional and administrative records (2006–2025) stands at less than 5% due to sustained staffing shortages and the absence of a dedicated Archive Unit.
  - iii. **Governance Status:** A formal Registry-level Knowledge Management Committee (KMC) was established, reporting directly to the Judges-level Strategic Plan Committee for performance tracking.
  - iv. **Technological Assets:** The Electronic Library of the African Court (ELA) and library management software are technically developed, though population of content remains ongoing.
  - v. **Systems Gap:** There is a critical absence of a centralized operational storage repository, meaning digitized files remain fragmented and difficult to access through a unified platform.
  - vi. **Resource Volatility:** The electronic library budget suffered an 84% reduction, hindering the Court's ability to meet specialized research demands.
  - vii. **Information Backlog:** Document categorization stands at only 2%, and older administrative archives remain in unsuitable physical storage conditions.
  - viii. **Staffing Constraints:** The absence of a dedicated archivist has slowed the institutionalization of the knowledge management system.

## STRATEGIC FOCUS:

96. The Court will prioritize the procurement and operationalization of a centralized Electronic Storage Repository to serve as the institutional nexus for all digitized assets. The focus is on transitioning from fragmented data storage to a functional "African Court Documentation System" (ACODO) and an integrated "African Jurisprudence Database" (AJUDATA). This includes implementing a rigorous data governance framework—focusing on standardized document naming and communication etiquette—and advocate for the designation of the "Electronic Library of the African Court" (ELA) as a continental centre of excellence for African human rights research.

## DEFINITION OF SUCCESS:

97. For this strategic cycle, success is defined by achieving the following state by January 2029:
  - i. **Unified Digital Architecture:** A centralized Electronic Storage Repository is operational, hosting the integrated E-Library, AJUDATA and ACODO systems.
  - ii. **Professionalized Archives:** Progressive establishment and strengthening of an Archives function, including advocacy for a permanent archivist position to institutionalize a secure and permanent storage system. The Court will prioritize a progressive, year-on-year increase in the categorization and secure storage of both administrative and judicial records, with the objective of systematically eliminating the institutional digitization backlog—specifically the 95% gap in administrative records—by the end of the strategic cycle.
  - iii. **Knowledge Centre of Excellence:** The Court is positioned as the premier continental centre of excellence for African human rights law, serving as a primary repository for specialized jurisprudence, comparative legal research and institutional expertise.
  - iv. **Research and Engagement Framework:** A structured framework for research is functional, involving active collaboration with African law schools and international academic publishers.
  - v. **Knowledge-Sharing Culture:** Standardized document management formatting, and naming guidelines are fully institutionalized across all departments, supported by regular staff training.
  - vi. **Open Access Leadership:** The Court serves as a catalyst for an African open access library, making key literature on African law freely accessible to promote knowledge democratization.

## KEY ANNUAL PERFORMANCE TARGETS (2026–2028):

98. Progress toward improved knowledge management will be monitored through the following key annual targets:

- i. **Repository Implementation:** Progressive installation and operationalization of the centralized storage repository.
- ii. **Categorization Milestone:** Achieve a year-on-year increase in document categorization.
- iii. **Digital Population:** Achieve a year-on-year increase in population of the E-Library and AJUDATA with searchable, OCR-processed documents.
- iv. **Budget Stabilization:** Advocate for sustainable and consistent budgetary allocation for the electronic library and digital resource subscriptions.
- v. **Staffing Milestone:** Gradual recruitment of the permanent Archivist and regularization of the Data Entry Assistant position.

## STRATEGIC INTERVENTIONS:

99. The following phased interventions represent the roadmap for enhancing the Court's knowledge infrastructure:

### 2026

- i. **Central Repository Procurement:** Prioritize the procurement and phased operationalization of the centralized Electronic Storage Repository.
- ii. **Governance and Coordination:** Task the Knowledge Management Committee to lead the annual review of KM and IT strategies to ensure technical alignment.
- iii. **Digitization Software Upgrade:** Purchase modern Optical Character Recognition (OCR) software to replace low-quality image files and accelerate backlog processing.
- iv. **Data Governance Framework:** Establish and enforce Document Management and Communication Etiquette guidelines for standardized file naming and saving.

### 2027

- i. **System Deployment (ELA/AJUDATA/ACODO):** Ensure the full development, population and official launch of the core digital knowledge systems.
- i. **Publisher Collaboration Strategy:** Systematically engage with academic publishers to secure institutional copies and free access to core academic content.
- ii. **Institutional Digitization Drive:** Implement an outsourcing pilot to accelerate the digitization of the institutional record backlog (2006–2025), focusing on transitioning administrative archives from physical to secure digital storage.

- iii. **Knowledge Management Training:** Implement training for all staff on the new knowledge-sharing procedures to cultivate an institutional research culture.
- iv. **Implementation of the Strategic Research Framework:** Operationalize the Court's Research Policy by identifying and developing Strategic Research Areas. This focus facilitates structured collaboration with African Law Schools and renowned international institutions to ensure the Court's jurisprudence is supported by rigorous, multi-jurisdictional legal scholarship.

## 2028

- ii. **Linguistic Centre of Excellence:** Maintain advanced language terminology management within the judicial proceedings workflow to ensure jurisprudential accuracy across all Union languages.
- iii. **Knowledge Centre of Excellence:** Fully populate the digital e-library and research repository to serve the diverse linguistic and academic needs of the continent.
- iv. **African Open Access Integration:** Formalize the Court's participation in existing AU open access initiatives—such as those managed by the Directorate of Information and Communication (DIC)—to secure expanded access to continental research repositories. This engagement focuses on leveraging Union-wide flagship programs to provide the Court's judicial and research staff with high-quality academic and legal material, while advocating for the democratization of knowledge across the African human rights system.
- v. **Systemic Digitalization Audit:** Review and digitize all remaining administrative and operating procedures to ensure cross-system compatibility between judicial, financial and HR systems.
- vi. **Permanent Staffing Initiative:** Initiate advocacy and preparatory processes for the recruitment for the approved Archivist position to establish the formal Archive Unit for administrative records.

## OUTPUT 3.4: IMPROVED MATERIAL RESOURCES

100. The Court's ability to perform its judicial functions effectively is predicated on the availability of a secure, modern and well managed physical environment. Optimal material resources ensure that Judges and staff can operate with the necessary tools while providing a dignified setting for continental justice. While the previous cycle saw exceptional service delivery—marked by a 95% client satisfaction rate and the implementation of modernized Travel and Procurement regulations—the prolonged occupancy of temporary premises has reached its structural limits, leading to infrastructure degradation and operational constraints. This strategic period focuses on institutionalizing a proactive maintenance framework while leveraging the Joint Facilitative Committee on implementation of the Host Agreement to deliver the Court's permanent seat. This output embodies the principle of shared responsibility by recognizing that the physical stature and security of the Court are a joint obligation of the African Union and the Host State, ensuring that the infrastructure of justice reflects the gravity of its continental mandate.

### **BASELINE (DECEMBER 2025):**

101. As of 31 December 2025, the Court's material resource landscape is defined by high internal efficiency alongside significant external infrastructure volatility:

- i. **Operational Excellence:** The Procurement, Travel and Stores Unit (PTSU) consistently exceeded a 95% client satisfaction rate and maintained 100% asset integrity and audit compliance.
- ii. **Land and Commitment:** The Host State formally allocated 25 hectares of land in the Arusha Diplomatic Enclave and approved an initial construction budget of US\$1.7 million.
- iii. **Construction Status:** Construction was at 58% as at December 2025. Collaboration with relevant departments of the AU Commission was undertaken with regard to submission of technical requirements for the fit-for-purpose requirements of the Court,
- iv. **Regulatory Wins:** The Court successfully implemented a modernized Travel Policy and comprehensive Procurement Regulations, which have streamlined service delivery and improved financial accountability.
- v. **Institutional Oversight:** Functional Procurement Committees are now fully operational, ensuring that material acquisitions adhere to Union standards of transparency and value for money.
- vi. **Digital Integration:** The Court completed multiple training cycles on the Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system, achieving a high level of staff proficiency across various modules to optimize asset management.

- vii. **Strategic Gaps:** The Infrastructure Development Strategy was not developed, and the Joint Facilitative Committee (JFC) reconvened in May 2025 after an eight-year hiatus.
- viii. **Premises Condition:** The current temporary building is experiencing significant degradation, with the landlord failing to execute essential renovations, thereby increasing maintenance costs.

## STRATEGIC FOCUS:

102. The Court will prioritize the adoption of a comprehensive Infrastructure Development Strategy to proactively manage its physical assets and the transition to its permanent premises. The focus is on intensifying diplomatic engagement through the Joint Facilitative Committee to support and monitor progress toward completion of the permanent premises. This includes implementing a strict internal procurement planning, recruiting essential technical staff for the PTSU and finalizing all technical specifications required for the new premises.

## DEFINITION OF SUCCESS:

103. For this strategic cycle, success is defined by achieving the following state by January 2029:

- i. **Permanent Premises:** The Court is institutionally prepared for transition to the permanent premises upon completion by the relevant authorities.
- ii. **Proactive Infrastructure Governance:** A comprehensive Infrastructure Development Strategy is fully operational, guiding the lifecycle management of all physical assets.
- iii. **Arusha as the Judicial Capital of Africa:** Promote Arusha's role as a continental hub for African judicial and human rights engagement. This focuses on leveraging the Court's permanent seat and continental judicial dialogues.
- iv. **Automated Logistical Systems:** Procurement and logistical processes are fully automated and integrated with SAP, ensuring real-time budget tracking and resource visibility.
- v. **Standardized Planning Culture:** Internal Units adhere to a standardized planning methodology, achieving 100% implementation of the annual procurement plan.
- vi. **Sustainable Asset Management:** A structured Asset Management System is in place to track the maintenance, replacement and long-term operational costs of the new facility.

## KEY ANNUAL PERFORMANCE TARGETS (2026–2028):

104. Progress toward improved material resources will be monitored through the following key annual targets:

- i. **Construction Milestones:** Monitor and report on quarterly construction progress benchmarks as verified by the Joint Technical Committee on the Permanent Premises.
- ii. **Meetings Frequency:** Advocate for and facilitate regular Joint Facilitative Committee meetings to monitor Host Agreement enforcement.
- iii. **Service Satisfaction:** Ensure a minimum 90% annual client satisfaction rate for all procurement, travel and stores services.
- iv. **Planning Compliance:** Progressively achieve a 100% adherence rate to the two-week minimum lead time for all non-emergency procurement requests.
- v. **Budget Execution:** Progressively achieve 100% implementation of the approved annual procurement and infrastructure maintenance plans.

## **STRATEGIC INTERVENTIONS:**

105. The following phased interventions represent the roadmap for modernizing the Court's infrastructure and logistics:

### **2026**

- i. **Enforcement of Host Agreement:** Follow up on the annual convening of the Joint Facilitative Committee to provide formal oversight of the implementation of the permanent premises construction roadmap and other issues related to the implementation of the Host Agreement.
- ii. **Arusha Judicial Capital Consolidation:** Support initiatives aimed at reinforcing Arusha's role as a continental centre for judicial and legal engagement by strengthening cooperation and coordination with regional and continental legal institutions such as through the African Union Judicial Dialogues.
- iii. **Internal Planning Reform:** Mandate a strict two-week lead time for all requests, linking Unit compliance to annual performance reviews to enforce better resource planning.
- iv. **Procurement Compliance and Technical Support:** In liaison with the African Union Commission, provide information, where required, on the furniture, equipment and functional requirements for the Court's permanent premises. This includes reviewing proposed specifications and installations, as appropriate, to support alignment with the Court's judicial, operational and security requirements

## 2027

- i. **Infrastructure Strategy Adoption:** Develop and progressively operationalize the comprehensive Infrastructure Development Strategy to manage current maintenance and transition planning.
- i. **High Level Diplomatic Alignment:** Institutionalize the Arusha Judicial Capital framework through sustained diplomatic engagement with the AU and the Host State. Focus on securing formal policy organ support for the Arusha branding initiative, ensuring that the development of the permanent seat reflects the city's status as the central site for African international justice.
- ii. **Process Automation Integration:** Develop and launch an automated procurement planning system integrated with SAP and AU-level budget software.
- iii. **Permanent Premises Transition:** Collaborate with the AUC Experts to ensure overall institutional readiness and provide input on finalization and implementation of the technical handover plan for the new facility involving all aspects.
- iv. **Environmental Sustainability Oversight:** Monitor the integration of self-automating energy efficient systems and digital first protocols within the new premises. This ensures the facility operates in full compliance with the Court's environmental requirements, leveraging smart building technology to systematically reduce the institutional carbon footprint.

## 2028

- i. **Asset Management System Rollout:** Implement the structured system to track maintenance and replacement cycles for all equipment in the permanent premises.
- ii. **Archival Space Operationalization:** Ensure the new Archive Unit is fully equipped with specialized shelving and climate control in line with the Knowledge Management Strategy.
- iii. **Logistical Structure Review:** Propose an optimal Facilities Management and PTSU structure commensurate with the expanded operational needs of managing a permanent international facility.
- iv. **Long-Term Sustainability Audit:** Conduct a full review of the infrastructure lifecycle and logistical efficiency to inform the next strategic cycle.

## OUTPUT 3.5: INCREASED FINANCIAL RESOURCES

106. For the Court to conduct its work with absolute independence and sustainability, it must secure financial resources that are commensurate with its expanding continental mandate. While the Court has demonstrated exceptional fiduciary integrity—consistently achieving unqualified audit opinions—it remains constrained by a regressive budgetary trend and external policy limitations on partner funding. This strategic cycle focuses on transitioning from financial stagnation to a diversified and predictable resource mobilization framework. This output operationalizes the principle of shared responsibility by reviving the proposal for establishment of a Court Trust Fund and advocating for a dedicated judicial budget line, ensuring that the financial stability of the Court is recognized as a joint obligation of the African Union and its Member States to shield the pursuit of justice from political fluctuations and administrative bottlenecks.

### BASELINE (DECEMBER 2025):

107. As of 31 December 2025, the Court's financial position is characterized by high fiduciary standards but stagnant growth:

- i. **Fiduciary Integrity:** The Court achieved four consecutive Unqualified Audit Opinions (2021–2024) and maintained a 95% external audit implementation rate.
- ii. **Budgetary Trend:** The budget has regressed to near-baseline levels, with the 2025 approved total of US\$10,813,232 representing only a 3.2% net increase since 2020.
- iii. **Mobilization Gaps:** The Resource Mobilization Strategy was not adopted, and the primary vehicle for diversification—the Court Trust Fund—was shelved during the previous cycle.
- iv. **Legal Aid Stagnation:** The AU Legal Aid Fund remains non-operational due to the pending appointment of the Board of Trustees by the AU Commission.
- v. **Audit Unit Capacity:** While the Internal Audit Unit achieved a 76% recommendation implementation rate, the absence of a dedicated budget line and a second audit position limits the unit's ability to provide continuous, high-level oversight across all Court operations.
- vi. **Systemic Misalignment:** The continental reporting tool (AMERT) remains inflexible to the judicial business model and remains inflexible to accommodate supplementary budgeting processes, creating unnecessary procedural friction.

### STRATEGIC FOCUS:

108. The Court will prioritize a multi-pronged approach to foster sustainable funding, primarily through the submission of a proposal for the establishment of a Trust Fund to support additional resource streams consistent with AU regulations and in line with the Court's judicial independence. In parallel, leveraging its proven track

record of audit excellence and leveraging on its independence, impartiality and integrity, the Court will undertake high-level advocacy campaign regarding the review of limitations that currently constrain direct partner funding. This strategy includes the adoption of a Resource Mobilization Strategy, advocacy for a dedicated budget line for internal audit, and intensifying engagement towards the operationalization of the Legal Aid Fund. To support these initiatives, the Court will formulate objective financial quality standards to establish an evidence-based methodology for all future funding requests.

## **DEFINITION OF SUCCESS:**

109. For this strategic cycle, success is defined by achieving the following state by January 2029:

- i. **Financial Sustainability:** The proposal for establishment of the Court Trust Fund is at the last stages of the relevant AU policy processes.
- ii. **Budgetary Stabilization:** The Court receives the budget necessary to undertake its core functions.
- iii. **Operational Legal Aid Fund:** The Legal Aid Fund is nearing operationalization, with an appointed Board of Trustees.
- iv. **Digitalized Oversight:** Specialized audit management software is in use, enabling 100% certification of funds and a 90% implementation rate for internal recommendations.

## **KEY ANNUAL PERFORMANCE TARGETS (2026–2028):**

110. Progress toward increased financial resources will be monitored through the following key annual targets:

- i. **Policy Adoption:** Progressively finalise and adopt the Resource Mobilization and Internal Audit strategies.
- ii. **Audit Independence:** Advocate for the establishment of a dedicated, independent budget line for the internal Audit Unit in the 2028 budget cycle.
- iii. **Constraint Repeal:** Advocate for a formal review of the Executive Council decision precluding the Court from receiving partner funding.
- iv. **Legal Aid Fund Activation:** Advocate for the appointment of the Legal Aid Fund Board of Trustees.
- v. **Execution Excellence:** Maintain a minimum annual budget execution rate of 95% and continue the streak of Unqualified Audit Opinions.
- vi. **Resource Growth:** Advocate for resources for the Court to undertake its core functions.

## STRATEGIC INTERVENTIONS:

111. The following phased interventions represent the roadmap for ensuring the Court's financial sustainability:

### 2026

- i. **Resource Mobilization Strategy Adoption:** Immediately finalize and adopt a comprehensive Resource Mobilization Strategy that incorporates a formal framework for coordinated fundraising among regional courts. This strategy serves as the primary instrument for guiding all stakeholder engagement and joint initiatives recommended by the Tripartite Dialogue.
- ii. **Trust Fund Design and Revival:** Update the comprehensive study for the establishment of the Court Trust Fund by conducting a comparative benchmarking exercise against the AU Peace Fund and other successful Union resource mechanisms. This ensures the proposed governance structure adheres to established AU financial standards while remaining dedicated to the Court's specific human rights mandate.
- iii. **High-Level Legal Aid Advocacy:** Prioritize engagement with the AUC Chairperson to finalize the appointment of the Board of Trustees for the Legal Aid Fund.
- iv. **Cost Transparency Inquiry:** Conduct a comprehensive review of meeting-related expenses to identify cost-saving measures and enhance transparency for Member States.

### 2027

- i. **Dedicated Trust Fund Lobby:** Resubmit to the relevant AUC and AU Policy Organs bodies the proposal to establish the Trust Fund.
- ii. **AMERT Customization Campaign:** Engage with the AUC Finance Directorate to adapt the reporting system to the specific operational requirements of a judicial body and to accommodate changes necessitated by provision of budgets following the supplementary budget cycle.
- iii. **Judicial Financial Standards:** Propose objective financial norms for court resourcing, covering judicial staff, technical equipment and courtroom security.
- iv. **Audit Unit Stabilization:** Advocate for resources to fill the second internal audit position at a P2 grade and update the audit risk universe to include new IT and operational processes.
- v. **Internal Audit Digitalization:** Secure funding for specialized audit software to improve documentation and automated recommendation tracking.

- i. **Trust Fund Operationalisation:** Advocate for approval by the AU Policy Organs of the establishment of the Trust Fund and finalize the legal and governance framework required for its launch. This includes preparing the technical guidelines for engaging with Member States, the private sector and the diaspora to ensure the fund is ready for immediate capitalization once approved.
- ii. **Judicial Model Impact Assessment:** Finalize a comprehensive study on the structural and financial requirements of a full-time judicial model to ensure institutional readiness. This technical assessment will be maintained for submission to the AU Policy Organs upon their request, ensuring the Court is prepared to operationalize any sovereign decision regarding its judicial structure.
- iii. **Financial Delegation Enhancement:** Leverage the Court's track record of audit excellence to formalize and expand existing levels of financial delegation. This ensures that as the Court transitions to its permanent seat and operationalizes new funding streams, its administrative agility remains commensurate with its judicial independence.
- iv. **External Finance Expert Appointment:** Strengthen the Audit Committee by appointing an external finance expert and providing specialized training on judicial oversight.
- v. **Systemic Integration of Recommendations:** Mandate the inclusion of all audit recommendations into Unit work plans with quarterly reporting to the relevant Judicial Committees.

## 4. GOVERNANCE AND IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK

112. The successful realization of this Strategic Plan depends on the continued transition from activity-based reporting to a results-oriented management culture. This final section defines the governance mechanisms required to translate the Court's strategic goals into daily operations, ensuring that the institution remains agile, accountable and financially resilient over the 2026–2028 period.
113. While internal governance mechanisms drive daily operations, the full implementation of certain strategic interventions remains inherently dependent on the external policy environment. Consequently, achieving specific outcomes will require the decisions, approvals, resource allocations or cooperation by AU Policy Organs, the African Union Commission, Member States, Host State authorities and strategic partners.

### 4.1 RESULTS-BASED PLANNING AND CASCADING

114. To address the historical gap between high-level strategy and daily work, the Court will continue the harmonization of its Results-Based Management (RBM) planning regime through:
- i. **Operational Logframe Matrix:** To bridge high level outputs and the annual planning cycle without expanding the core text of this Strategic Plan, the Registry will develop a comprehensive, standalone Operational Logframe Matrix. This matrix will serve as a primary derivative product to map out detailed indicators, baselines, targets, and means of verification. It will be utilized dynamically by the Strategic Plan Committee and the Registry during annual planning cycles to track interventions and ensure the seamless cascading of the three-year strategy into manageable Annual Work Plans (AWPs).
  - ii. **Unified Annual Work Plans (AWPs):** All Divisions and Units will utilize a uniform RBM template and codebook to ensure that daily activities are explicitly linked to the 3 Strategic Objectives and 12 Strategic Outputs defined in this plan.
  - iii. **Operational Joint Planning:** The Strategic Plan Committee (SPC), supported by its Registry-level Secretariat and the Knowledge Management Committee, will host structured annual Joint Planning Retreats. This framework ensures judicial ownership of strategic priorities while leveraging Registry expertise to foster cross departmental synergy and prevent fragmented execution of the Court's mandate.
  - iv. **Biannual Strategic Forecasting:** The Court will implement a biannual rolling calendar aligned with the mid-year and annual staff appraisal cycles. This framework allows management to adapt activities to emerging political and judicial trends at six-month intervals, ensuring that operational work plans remain responsive without losing sight of the three-year strategic targets.
  - v. **Prioritization and Phased Implementation:** Recognizing existing financial, staffing and operational constraints, the Court will apply a phased and prioritized implementation approach to the Strategic Plan. Annual Work Plans shall identify

high-impact and resource-feasible interventions for each implementation cycle, while lower-priority activities may be deferred subject to available resources and evolving institutional needs.

## 4.2 MONITORING, EVALUATION, ACCOUNTABILITY AND LEARNING (MEAL)

115. The Court will transition to a *Continuous Implementation Review* model, moving away from top-down, end-of-year reporting, through:

- i. **MEAL Task Team:** A dedicated technical team will be established within the Knowledge Management Committee to oversee a biannual data entry and review cycle, offer staff training on results-based principles and report to the Strategic Plan Committee.
- ii. **Bottom-Up Feedback Loops:** Monitoring data will be collected through direct, Unit-level interactions to ensure that performance reports reflect the operational reality on the ground.
- iii. **Risk-Based Reporting:** Every progress review will include a Strategic Risk Assessment to identify and mitigate threats to implementation in real-time.
- iv. **Integrated Institutional Analytics:** The Knowledge Management System (KMS)—comprising AJUDATA, the E-library, and ACODO—will serve as the integrated framework for institutional metrics. By aggregating data from these three pillars, the KMS will provide a unified automated source for both judicial and administrative reporting. This reduces the manual reporting burden on staff and ensures that metrics, ranging from jurisprudence trends to library utilization and document archival status, are pulled from a single, verified environment.
- v. **Implementation Constraint Tracking:** The monitoring framework shall systematically identify and document structural constraints affecting implementation, including delays arising from external approvals, budgetary limitations, staffing gaps, host state processes, and policy organ decisions. This approach ensures that implementation assessments distinguish between institutional performance challenges and factors beyond the Court's direct control.
- vi. **Standardized Terminology:** To ensure data integrity, the Court will implement a MEAL Codebook, defining critical parameters (e.g., output vs. outcome) to be used across all reporting Units, uniform RBM-based templates for Annual Work Plans (AWPs) and quarterly progress reporting, and a style guide with tailored examples.

## 4.3 FINANCIAL GOVERNANCE AND RESOURCE MOBILIZATION

116. To ensure the realism of this plan, the Court will adopt an *Integrated Costing Model*, linking every strategic intervention to a specific funding source or mobilization target, including:

- i. **Activity-Based Budgeting (ABB):** The operationalization of this plan will be supported by an independent Financial Implementation Roadmap, which provides a comprehensive, itemized costing for the 2026–2028 cycle. Developed as a primary derivative tool of the strategy, this rolling resource framework maps the exact financial requirements for every phased intervention to ensure that all subsequent annual budget submissions to the African Union are structurally verified, cost effective and commensurate with the Court's mandate.
- ii. **Policy Driven Diversification:** The Court will proactively advocate for the review of restrictive funding decisions while operationalizing the Court Trust Fund and exploring alternative resource mechanisms, including technical secondments and multi-year partner grants.
- iii. **Strategic Financial Alignment:** The Annual Work Plan cycle will be strictly synchronized with the African Union's budgetary calendar to maximize the success of resource allocation requests and ensure value for money in all institutional expenditures.

#### 4.4 INSTITUTIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY

117. The Court will strengthen its internal accountability framework to foster a cohesive institutional identity through:

- i. **Strategic Plan Rollout and Stakeholder Sensitization:** To ensure wide ownership and visibility across the continent, the official launch of this document will be accompanied by a coordinated, multilingual sensitization campaign. Guided by the Communication Strategy, the Registry will target national judiciaries, bar associations, law societies, civil society, as well as regional, continental and international human rights mechanisms to unpack the priorities of the 2026–2028 cycle. This rollout will utilize the Court's digital platforms to ensure that the theme of shared responsibility is actively communicated and integrated into the continental legal consciousness from the outset of the implementation cycle.
- ii. **Internal Communication Protocol:** To improve operational efficiency, the Court will disseminate the Plan internally to ensure the timely flow of information for purposes of alignment of work plans.
- iii. **Integrated Results-based Reporting:** The Court will evolve its statutory reporting—primarily the Annual Activity Report—from a traditional activity-based log into a comprehensive results-based assessment tool. This upgraded format will evaluate judicial impact, procedural efficiency and user-satisfaction against established strategic benchmarks, providing a data-driven account of the Court's performance.
- iv. **Alignment with Continental Priorities:** This reporting evolution is designed to demonstrate explicitly how the Court's judicial and administrative outcomes contribute to the goals of Agenda 2063 and the AU Strategic Plan (2024–2028). By providing data-driven evidence of its contribution to the rule of law and

continental integration, the Court ensures its value proposition is clearly communicated to AU Policy Organs and Member States.

- v. **Institutionalized Feedback Loops:** The Court will establish a formal mechanism to ensure that the findings from the results-based Annual Activity Report are used by the Strategic Plan Committee and Court Management to iteratively adapt policies, refine working procedures and improve service delivery on a biannual basis.
- vi. **Institutional Memory and Continuity:** To ensure continuity across judicial and administrative transitions, the Court will strengthen institutional memory systems through standardized handover procedures, archival preservation, knowledge-sharing mechanisms and structured induction processes for newly elected Judges and recruited staff.