Digital Transformation in Africa

1. Digital transformation could be a game-changer for the African continent. It is an opportunity to boost economic growth and industrialisation, alleviate poverty and improve people's lives. The use of digital technology and services will contribute to the African Union Agenda 2063.

2. Digital technology can drive innovation, economic growth and job creation in many key sectors of the economy, and allows for greater interconnection of African markets with one another and with the rest of the world. It can enhance both market and financial access for all, particularly in marginalised areas neglected by traditional financial institutions. Promoting digitalization in Africa will maximize our impact in sectors such as health, energy, transport, agriculture, education and facilitating access to basic social services, consistent with our broader good governance and development policies and programmes.

3. Accessible, secure and reliable Internet is critical to closing the digital gap and reducing inequalities. It can greatly contribute to enhancing human capital and providing new opportunities for young people in Africa. Women and girls, especially those living in poverty and in rural communities, are most likely to be more affected by the digital divide. We welcome the G20 *eSkills4Girls* initiative that promotes digital skills for women and girls and which will contribute to supporting their participation in the digital economy.

4. We collectively endeavour to provide strong support to bridge the digital divide and promote digital transformation in Africa in line with our national commitments. We note in that respect the recommendations from the EU-African Union Digital Economy Task Force, the Digital Economy Moonshot for Africa and Smart Africa initiatives. Our common strategy for Africa will be based on the following objectives:

   (i)   Enabling the necessary digital infrastructure in order to reduce the digital gap and inequality, including in isolated countries and regions that are excluded or underserved, and encouraging the transport and logistics activities that serve e-commerce and e-government on a regional basis. Fostering fair competition and transparency in building digital infrastructures is key to this end. This needs to be complemented by the right investment climate in order to attract private sector resources.

   (ii)   Developing digital literacy and skills, particularly in the field of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), in order to equip young

people, especially young women and girls, with the skills necessary to take advantage of the growth and prosperity promised by the digital economy, whilst protecting against online risks and harms, and promoting inclusion, notably for women.

(iii) Fostering digital transformation for growth, entrepreneurship, job creation, and private-sector empowerment, particularly digital start-ups, SMEs and innovative community initiatives, by using digital technologies to provide support.

(iv) Expanding new solutions offered by digitalization across other sectors, such as health, agriculture, energy, e-commerce, electronic payment and governance.

(v) Creating enabling environments to allow national stakeholders to manage digital risks in coordination with the existing work of international and African organizations.

(vi) Sharing best practices between G7 and African partners, including experiences about creating legislative and regulatory frameworks, notably regarding data protection.

5. Improving the enabling environment and encouraging private sector investment and funds is a central part of this process. In this regard, we underline the need to boost private sector financing, including by using blended capital and other risk mitigation instruments. We encourage countries to adopt sound and predictable tax and regulatory frameworks in order to build stability and trust for investors in the digital sector in Africa.

6. We also commit to addressing telecommunications security – including 5G security - and to ensuring that the digital transformation benefits all and promotes good governance, environmental sustainability, equitable economic transformation and job creation.

7. In the context of the digitalization of Africa, we recognise the need to address the specific situation of fragile regions, such as the Sahel, Horn of Africa and Lake Chad regions.