

**Directorate of Information and Communication****Press Release No. 077/2017****President Mugabe supports the African Union Foundation resource mobilization initiative through a donation 300 cattle for auction**

**Gweru, Zimbabwe, May 16, 2017** – The African Union Foundation (AUF), the institution charged with promoting domestic resource mobilisation for African development has received a donation of 300 head of cattle from H.E. President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe.

The donation was pledged by President Mugabe during his tenure as the AU Chairperson during the 25th AU Summit, held in Johannesburg, South Africa and proceeds from the auction will be used to raise funds to support the initiatives of the AUF.

The 300 cattle will be auctioned in a series of events that will take place nationwide throughout the month of May. The first two auction took place last week, in Harare, Zimbabwe's capital city and Gweru – in the midlands – which were transformed into a hive of activity as they hosted the auctions.

Speaking during the auctions, Mr. Dumisani Mngadi, the AUF Chief Operations Officer expressed gratitude to Zimbabweans for this gesture. "With a population of over 1 billion people, Africa needs to take a lead in financing its own developmental programmes."

Mr. Mngadi further said that, "To develop and realise the vision set out in Agenda 2063, Africans need to finance their own programmes. Institutions like the AU cannot rely heavily on funding from countries outside our continent as the model is not sustainable. We need to be innovative and come up with African solutions to our African challenges. When making the pledge, H.E. President Mugabe reminded us that Africans are cattle people, and that we measure our prosperity by the herd of our cattle. This donation speaks to Africans being innovative and coming up with African solutions to our African challenges. It also explores creative alternative sources of funding. "

Mr. Mngadi added that the proceeds from the auctions will fund the AUF youth and women empowerment programmes such as the project to "Eradicate the hand-held hoe" as a way of transforming subsistence agriculture on the continent through mechanization to ensure that women farmers have higher yields and the African Youth Innovation Project that was unveiled at the African Economic Platform held in Mauritius. In March 2017.

Mr. Mngadi called on other African nations to follow in the Zimbabwean example to resource the AU Foundation.

Leading the auctions on behalf of the Government of Zimbabwe, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Hon. Simbarashe S. Mumbengegwi, said Zimbabwean farmers supported the president's gesture and offered to volunteer cattle from their ranches on behalf of the president.

“President Mugabe takes our (AU) organisation's interests very seriously and they are very close to his heart. He has always been a strong voice in Africans financing their own organisation and would say ‘whoever pays the piper chooses the tune’. Therefore, as long as outsiders finance our institutions they will dictate the agenda. This donation to the AU Foundation is an indication of how seriously he takes self-financing, said Hon.Mr. Mumbengegwi.

The proceeds that will be generated from the auctions will be presented during the upcoming AU Summit, scheduled to take place in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in July 2017

The African Union Foundation (AUF) was established by the African Union as part of promoting domestic resource mobilisation for African development. The Foundation was officially launched on Friday, 30 January 2015 during the 24th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government - Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

The Foundation aims to engage Africa's private sector, African citizens, communities, and leading African philanthropists to generate resources and provide valuable insight on ways in which their success can accelerate Africa's development.

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