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The Chairperson of the African Union Commission Calls for Renewed Commitment to Africa’s Integration Agenda on Africa Integration Day

The Chairperson of the African Union Commission, H.E. Mahmoud Ali Youssouf, today joined Africans across the continent and in the diaspora in commemorating Africa Integration Day, calling for renewed political commitment and collective action to accelerate Africa’s integration agenda at a time of growing global uncertainty.

Commemorated annually on 7 July, Africa Integration Day marks the launch of the operational phase of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) in Niamey, Niger, in 2019. It celebrates Africa’s enduring vision of unity, shared prosperity and collective self-reliance.

The Chairperson emphasized that, in an increasingly fragmented global economy, deeper African integration is no longer simply an aspiration—it is a strategic imperative : “African unity is our greatest strategic asset. The AfCFTA is the defining economic project of our generation and our best opportunity to transform Africa’s immense potential into prosperity for all Africans.”

H.E. Youssouf noted that the AfCFTA brings together a market of 55 countries, more than 1.3 billion people and a combined GDP of approximately US\$3.4 trillion. Yet, with intra-African trade still accounting for only around 16–18 per cent of the continent’s total trade, he stressed that Africa’s greatest opportunity lies not beyond its borders, but within them.

The Chairperson called on Member States to accelerate the implementation of the AfCFTA and other continental integration instruments by removing barriers to trade, harmonizing regulations and investing in the infrastructure that connects African economies. He underlined that roads, railways, ports, energy systems and digital connectivity are indispensable to unlocking regional value chains, industrialization and sustainable growth.

He further stressed that the free movement of people is essential to the success of the continental market. Facilitating the mobility of entrepreneurs, traders, professionals, students and workers, alongside the progressive implementation of the Protocol on Free Movement of Persons, will strengthen trade, investment, innovation and people-to-people integration across the continent.

The Chairperson also underscored that Africa’s integration agenda must deliver tangible opportunities for young people, women, entrepreneurs, farmers and small businesses, while reaffirming that peace, security, good governance and the Regional Economic Communities remain indispensable pillars of successful continental integration.



On this Africa Integration Day, H.E. Mahmoud Ali Youssouf called on all Africans to renew their confidence in the continent's future and to work together towards the realization of Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want : “History will judge this generation not by the vision it inherited, but by the Africa it succeeds in building together. Let us move forward with unity, determination and confidence towards an integrated, prosperous and peaceful continent.”

The Chairperson reaffirmed the African Union Commission's unwavering commitment to working with Member States and all partners to advance Africa's integration agenda and translate continental ambitions into tangible benefits for every African citizen.

Long live African unity. Long live the African Union. Long live Agenda 2063 and The Africa We Want.

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