

Retreat of the Executive Council of the AU on the Implementation of Agenda 2063

Welcome Statement by Hon. Vincent BIRUTA, Minister of Foreign
Affairs and International Cooperation of the Republic of Rwanda

Kigali, 1st October 2023

- Your Excellency, **Dhoihir DHOULKAMAL**, Minister of Foreign
Affairs and International Cooperation of the Union of Comoros,
and Chairperson of the Executive Council,
- Excellency, **Monique NSANZABAGANWA**, Deputy Chairperson of
the African Union Commission,
- Excellencies Ministers and Commissioners of the African Union,
- Excellencies Representatives of Members States and Regional
Organizations,
- Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen.

Good morning.

I wish to extend my greetings to you on behalf of the people and the Government of the Republic of Rwanda. We are honoured and privileged to be the host of this important retreat.

Allow me to particularly thank the AU Champion for Agenda 2063, H.E. Alassane Dramane OUATTARA, President of the Republic of Ivory Coast for his tireless efforts in ensuring that the implementation of Agenda 2063 stays on course.

I wish to recognize the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Ministers of Finance and Ministers of Planning who, despite their very busy schedules, have managed to travel to Kigali and attend this retreat. This is very much appreciated.

I also want to thank the AU Commission for continuing to spearhead the agenda 2063's implementation process and for doing commendable work despite the challenges brought by the Covid-19 pandemic, which evidently put a dent into the full realization of the set priorities for the First Ten Years of implementation of Agenda 2063.

This retreat comes at a very opportune time, enabling us to engage in collective brainstorming and to renew our commitment to monitoring the continental priorities of Agenda 2063.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The AU Agenda 2063, serving as Africa's blueprint for socio-economic development, has demonstrated commendable progress in its first 10 years of implementation. Substantive advancements have been made to improve road network connectivity, Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM), electrification, access to ICT, gender equality, and the establishment of the AfCFTA, to name but a few.

While the continent has made notable progress during the first decade of Agenda 2063, we need to acknowledge that we are still facing considerable challenges in areas such as poverty reduction, job creation, free movement of people, and in ensuring a secure and peaceful Africa. These issues will require our full attention in the Second Ten Year Implementation Plan.

We therefore look forward to discussing at length on how we can better domesticate, finance, coordinate and build the capacities of

actors in the delivery of the Agenda. Given the current challenges, it is crucial that we double our efforts during the Second decade of Agenda 2063.

To that end, Rwanda remains fully committed to playing an active role in ensuring that the development goals of our Union are reached.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, I once again extend a warm welcome to you all and my best wishes for a successful retreat.

Thank you all for your kind attention.
