



MEDIA ADVISORY



INVITATION TO MEDIA REPRESENTATIVES

- What:** African Union High Level Panel on Humanitarian Effectiveness in Africa
- Theme:** *“One Africa, One Voice, One Message at the World Humanitarian Summit”*
- When:** **24th May, 2016**
- Where:** Istanbul, Turkey
- Who:** The Department of Political Affairs of the African Union Commission (AUC) in collaboration with United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA); United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR); United Nations Special Rapporteur on Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons; Intergovernmental Authority on Development and Norwegian Refugee Council/Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre.
- Why:** The High Level Panel will provide space for dialogue between Africa's leaders and people, and the wider global community on ways of creating an effective and inclusive humanitarian system.

The African Union will present a Common African Position (CAP) on Humanitarian Effectiveness at the Summit, as its contribution in shaping a future Agenda for Humanity proposed by the Secretary General of the United Nations. The CAP encapsulates Africa Union's (AU) vision on humanitarian issues in line with its Agenda 2063, and represents

the voices and concerns of Africa's leaders and people in shaping a future humanitarian architecture.

To deepen dialogue on this vision, the AU will host a High Level Panel on Humanitarian Effectiveness in Africa. The High Level Panel will be convened under the theme: Humanitarian Effectiveness in Africa. The theme underscores AU's Humanitarian Agenda in the next decade and the call by Africa's leaders and that of the UN Secretary General for a future humanitarian system which is effective, relevant and fit for purpose.

Objectives:

The main objectives of the AU High Level Panel on Humanitarian Effectiveness in Africa are to: Announce Africa's commitments on effective humanitarian response in line with the 5 Core Responsibilities announced by the UN Secretary General; and engage the wider global community on Africa's long-term vision on humanitarian issues particularly in addressing underlying structural causes of forced displacement and sustainable durable solutions.

Expected outcomes: In advancing Agenda for Humanity, the African Union will commit to five Core areas:

- a) Commitment to the humanitarian imperative, especially the recommitment to the humanitarian principles and principled humanitarian action;
- b) Commitment to humanitarian effectiveness, particularly in ensuring timely protection and assistance of persons affected by humanitarian crises;
- c) Commitment of the AU to strengthen the role of States in humanitarian action;
- d) Commitments and undertakings of the AU to reform of the humanitarian architecture. In this regard, the AU will seize the opportunity to announce the establishment of the **African Humanitarian Agency**;
- e) Commitments and measures of the AU to put in place predictable financing and alternative resource mobilisation for effective humanitarian response.

Participants:

H.E. Aisha Abdullahi - AU Commissioner for Political and Humanitarian Affairs

Professor Chaloka Beyani - United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons

H.E. Maya Sahli Fadel - Special Rapporteur on Refugees, Asylum Seekers, Internally Displaced Persons and Migrants in Africa

Dr. James Mwangi - Managing Director Equity Bank/Representative of the Private Sector.

H.E. Sindiso Ndema Ngwenya – Secretary General of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa

Amb. (Eng.) Mahboub Maalim – Executive Secretary of Intergovernmental Authority on Development

Ms. Phaladi Gogontlejang and Ms Esther Muiruri – Youth Representatives

Background: The first-ever World Humanitarian Summit, in Istanbul on 23-24 May 2016, is a global call to action by the United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.

The Summit was called for by the Secretary General of the United Nations during the 68th Session of the UN General Assembly, in September 2013, as part of his transformative Agenda announced in 2012. This was in response to persistent failures experienced in the global humanitarian system, as a result of the rapidly changing humanitarian landscape.

To reach a consensus on what such an Agenda would entail, the World Humanitarian Summit consultations were carried out in all regions of the world, Africa inclusive. Based on the recommendations of global consultations, the Secretary General of the United Nations, has released a Report on the World Humanitarian Summit titled **“One Humanity: Shared Responsibility”** In the report the Secretary General has called for an **Agenda for Humanity**, in five Core Responsibility areas, namely; *global leadership to prevent and end conflicts; uphold norms that safeguard humanity; leave no one behind; change people’s lives-from delivering aid to ending need and invest in humanity.*

THE COMMON AFRICAN POSITION ON HUMANITARIAN EFFECTIVENESS

It is with this picture in mind that the Executive Council in its Decision **Ex.CL/Dec.817 (XXV)**, called for a political process to define Africa’s priorities and the changes it would like to see in a future humanitarian architecture.

This is not the first time Africa is calling for such changes. Africa's leaders as well as voices of its people and civil society, have reiterated the call for change in the way humanitarian response is carried out on the continent. The Common Position is a reminder of previous calls by Africa's leaders to put mechanisms in place to effectively respond to crises. Indeed numerous measures were deployed in the past, but for a number of reasons, these measures were not well orchestrated. As a consequence, solutions to address humanitarian crises on the continent remained ineffective.

The CAP which has been conceived in wider lenses of Africa's own long-term vision encapsulated in Agenda 2063, underscores need for a new discourse. The new discourse is premised on the conviction that Africa can find "***own solutions to its own problems***".

The Common African Position therefore represents Africa's appreciation and its understanding of the humanitarian landscape and the required intervention that is necessary for achieving sustainable solutions to humanitarian crises.

The Common African Position, emphasizes the primary responsibility of Member States in humanitarian response. It calls for strengthening of State capabilities particularly in ensuring that States play a central role in providing security to affected populations and relief workers and in guaranteeing humanitarian space.

The World Humanitarian Summit is therefore timely. Africa's leaders as a collective will join the rest of world in shaping a new humanitarian Agenda.

AFRICA'S COMMITMENTS AT ISTANBUL

It was therefore on the basis of this rapidly mutating context and failures experienced in the global system, that it was felt necessary for the African Union to present its case at the World Humanitarian Summit in shaping a future humanitarian architecture.

As underscored by the Executive Council and the Assembly of the Union, time is ripe, it is Africa's moment to orchestrate the long awaited change, to better serve people afflicted by humanitarian crises.

AFRICAN UNION AND MEMBER STATE PARTICIPATION AT ISTANBUL

Therefore, in light of the importance of this first ever World Humanitarian Summit to bring change, Africa's leaders need to be part of this process of change. This is not only for historical purposes but, to unequivocally voice Africa's concerns and aspirations. Africa's attendance at the highest level of the Union, the Commission, Member States and Regional Economic Communities, is therefore crucial.

At Istanbul, the African Union will present its Common African Position on *Humanitarian Effectiveness*, as its contribution to the Summit. It is of paramount importance that Africa speaks with one voice as called for by the Executive Council and the Assembly.

The Summit will be attended at the highest level of Heads of State and Government. This provides a good opportunity for Africa's leaders to demonstrate solidarity with affected people and join the rest of the world in taking forward the *Agenda for Humanity*.

Journalists are invited to cover the Event.

Contact:

Dr. Matlosa Khebele, Director Political Affairs Department, African Union Commission, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, Tel. +(251) 11 551 7700, E-mail: matlosak@africa-union.org;

Olabisi A. Dare, Political Affairs Department, African Union Commission, Tel. +(251) 11 551 7844 E-mail: dareo@africa-union.org;

Rita Amukhobu, Political Affairs Department, African Union Commission Tel. + (251) 11 551 7700, amukhobu@africa-union.org;

Renny Mike Wafula, Political Affairs Department, Mob + (251) 911034142, E-mail: wafula.rm@gmail.com.

For media inquiries contact:

Esther AzaaTankou | Ag. Director of Information and Communication | African Union Commission | E-mail: Yambooue@african-union.org | Tel: +251 911361185 Directorate of Information and Communication | African Union Commission | E-mail: DIC@african-union.org | Website: www.au.int | Addis Ababa | Ethiopia

For further information:

Directorate of Information and Communication | African Union Commission | E-mail: DIC@african-union.org | Website: www.au.int | Addis Ababa | Ethiopia

Follow us

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/AfricanUnionCommission>

Twitter: https://twitter.com/_AfricanUnion

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/AUCommission>

Learn more at: <http://www.au.int>