



NEW YEAR STATEMENT FROM DR. NKOSAZANA DLAMINI ZUMA CHAIRPERSON OF THE AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION

In 2012, we celebrated success in a number of fields as the continent sought to achieve its common vision of development, peace and integration. The development outlook for the continent looks bright as Africa is now considered the next growth pole. A number of countries inched closer to their development goals by registering impressive growth rates, some of which were in excess of 10%. Other countries discovered new sources of wealth in the form of minerals, oil and other deposits. Good governance became the norm in many countries. In Somalia, the country has entered a post conflict reconstruction and development phase. In September, African mediation resulted in the signing of a historic agreement between Sudan and South Sudan. Our athletes took to the track and field in the London Olympics and brought glory to the continent. Many other countless successes were realized.

2013 will mark a momentous occasion for the continent: the 50th anniversary of the formation of the Organisation of African Unity, and 11 years of the launch of the African Union. As the Secretariat of the Union, the Commission will ensure that the marking of 50th anniversary is an important milestone in the history of the continent. It will be an opportunity to reflect on where we come from, appreciate where we are, and plan for where we are going in the next 50 years. In this regard, a long term African Union-wide strategic framework is under development. Similarly, the 4 year AU Commission Strategy (2013-2017) is being finalized.

In the New Year, the continent will host the African Cup of Nations in South Africa. The tournament will be an opportunity for Africa and its citizens to come together as players and spectators. It will also be an opportunity to demonstrate the spirit of fair play, courage, respect for diversity and determination. More importantly, soccer as a catalyst for change will bring together communities across borders, races, colour, religion and language.

But challenges await us as we enter the New Year. As a continent we are still dealing with conflict situations that derail the continent's march towards development. The situations in Mali, the Central African Republic, and the DRC require our continued attention and resolution.

In 2013, the Union will continue to monitor elections in Africa. For the first time, the AUC will be sending a Long Term Observer (LTO) Expert Mission to the scheduled March 4th 2013 General Elections in the Republic of Kenya.

On the programmatic front, we are making progress in science, as scientific advancement will heavily influence our development process. We are about to launch the Pan African University.

Efforts to harmonise infrastructure development are well under way under the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA). The Commission is working with Member States to realize the goals of intra African trade.

Agriculture remains the backbone of Africa's economy. The Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP) continues to be the platform best placed to raise agricultural productivity. With this programme, Africa expects not only to have enough food supplies but also to have excess to export, thereby contributing to family incomes and raising standards of living for the majority of the continent's one billion people.

Environmental and climate change are also major priorities for the Union as we seek to ensure that we leave a legacy of sound environmental management for our children.

In terms of health, the Union will focus particularly on maternal and child health, under the Campaign for Accelerated Reduction of Maternal Mortality in Africa (CARMMA) and on fighting the scourges of HIV, tuberculosis and malaria.

Women constitute more than 50% of the continent's population and their engagement in all spheres of human endeavor is imperative. Thus the Commission will continue to aim to achieve 50-50 parity in its employment structures, ensure that women attain decision making positions and to advocate for women's development across the continent on the platform of the African Women's Decade.

As we enter the New Year, I would like to thank the Heads of State and Government of the African Union, Member States, and the African citizens for their support to our work. I would also like to thank the management and staff of the African Union Commission for their unparalleled commitment to our continent.

The Commission is aware of the challenges that lie ahead of us, as well as of the need to consolidate the gains that have been made thus far. The Commission will do everything in its power to advance the continental agenda, building on the achievements registered so far. Africa is on the right track. United we are strong.

On behalf of the African Union Commission, I wish you all a happy and prosperous 2013. Let us advance the ideals of Pan Africanism and the African Renaissance.

Addis Ababa, 31st December 2012