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 Directorate of Information and Communication

**PRESS RELEASE N. 16/ 21<sup>ST</sup> AU SUMMIT**
**The African Union Executive Council opens with a call for a People Centred Union to achieve the Africa 2063 vision**


**Addis Abba 22 May 2013** –“We meet on the eve of the celebrations of the 50th Anniversary of the OAU/AU. Like in May 1963, the eyes of the continent and the world are focused on our activities and deliberations” Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, Chairperson of the African Union Commission, was speaking today, Wednesday 22 May 2013, while addressing the 23<sup>rd</sup> Ordinary Session of the Executive Council at the headquarters of the African Union (AU), in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. She noted that, “like in 1963 when the founding states took their first steps into political independence, in 2013 we see Africa taking off towards peace and prosperity”.

The opening ceremony took place in the presence of Mr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Chairperson of the Executive Council and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Federal Democratic

Republic of Ethiopia; Mr. Erastus Mwencha, Deputy Chairperson of the AUC, Mr. Carlos Lopes, UN Under-Secretary-General and Executive Secretary of the UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) ; AUC Commissioners, representatives of the Diplomatic Corps, AUC staff, and the invited guests.

Dr. Dlamini Zuma expressed satisfaction at the state of preparedness of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) now the African Union (AU), which she qualifies as memorable, people-centered, global, involving the young people, the women, and the Diaspora with a view to leaving a lasting legacy. “Through these celebrations we will reclaim the African narrative, as we reflect on the past, assess our present state and plan our future” she emphasized.

**Year-long Anniversary activities to galvanise, mobilise and energize**

The AUC Chairperson expressed appreciation of the fact that African Member States and the different sectors in the society have taken up the clarion call to organize commemorative activities in their respective countries through the year-long anniversary celebration of the OAU - AU. Global reflection and debates are ongoing on the theme of the 21<sup>st</sup> AU Summit: *Pan Africanism and African Renaissance* and on the Africa 2063 vision, across the continent and the Diaspora. According to Chairperson Dlamini – Zuma, “these debates by Africans from all walks reaffirm Pan Africanism as a guide to action and the foundations for Africa’s Renaissance”. She added that, “ as we reflect on the 50th Anniversary Proclamation, we must be mindful of the inputs from our people....We must be

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mindful of our people's expectations that we should emerge from this Summit – as our Founders did in 1963 – with a mission that will unite Africa and set her on the path to peace and prosperity”.



Dr. Dlamini – Zuma expressed optimism on the fact that Africa's natural resources, its unused arable land and water, its potential for energy generation, its long coastlines rich in marine resources, to name but a few are potentials to use in achieving the 2063 agenda.

Quoting the eminent Pan Africanist, President Kwame Nkrumah in his speech to the Founding meeting in May 1963, the AUC Chairperson said “*Nothing will be of avail, except the united act of a united Africa*”. She explained that “as we chart the mission of our generations for the next fifty years, we must learn from the past and guard against the difficulties that President Nkrumah warned against. ( see complete speech of the AUC Chairperson on the AU website: [www.au.int](http://www.au.int) ).

The Chairperson of the Executive Council on his part congratulated the AU Member States for the celebration of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary which he said is a significant milestone and a historic occasion to honor African heroines and heros while placing Africa at the forefront of world affairs. Dr. Tedros underlined that the commemoration of the OAU-AU jubilee is important as it will chart the way for a prosperous and peaceful Africa. He hoped that this new generation of panAfricans will achieve the dreams of the founding fathers through African renaissance.

Minister Tedros called on his peers to meet at a more appropriate time and reflect on how to contribute to the agenda 2063. In this respect, he invited the Ministers for a retreat in one town called Bahidar outside of Addis Ababa where they can exchange views and produce constructive input to the vision.

Chairperson Tedros reminded the ministers on the items on their agenda including the draft Proclamation of the 50<sup>th</sup> OAU-AU anniversary to be adopted during the 21<sup>st</sup> AU Summit scheduled for 26 and 27 May 2013. (See complete speech of the AU Chairperson on the AU website: [www.au.int](http://www.au.int) ).

Mr. Lopes on his part stressed on the importance of the celebrations as it acknowledges the key role that the pan-African ideal played in promoting continental unity. “It meant overcoming domination and oppression by ending colonialism and apartheid in the continent. It asserted at the same time the possibility of rapid socio-economic transformation of the continent”. He said, adding that, “it was only quite logical that our forefathers and foremothers came together despite divergences in their ideological dispositions to form the Organization of African Unity”.

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In concluding his statement, the ECA Executive Secretary said “just as our forefathers and foremothers laid the foundation for our dignity and freedom from oppression, we have the collective responsibility to lay a sound basis for the prosperity of present and future generations. The trends are in our favour but we must do our part”. (See complete speech of the ECA Executive Secretary on the AU website: [www.au.int](http://www.au.int) ).

### **Ministers to Brainstorm on AU Proclamation /Agenda 2063**

The Executive Council at their current ordinary session will discuss and provide a framework for the Proclamation on the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the OAU-AU and the implementation of the Africa 2063 vision. The draft Proclamation comprises inputs from civil society including the youth assembly, business forum, women, African Editors, and academicians. It frames the African Union’ s key objectives for the next five decades around the themes of African Identity and Renaissance; the Integration agenda; the agenda for Social and Economic Development and Prosperity; Peace and Security; Democratic Governance; Self-reliance and Africa’s place in the World.

According to the AUC Chairperson, in each of these areas, the Proclamation must spell out the continental mission and strategic objectives for the next fifty years in a bid to help Africa to comprehensively deal with the challenges ahead.

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