



Directorate of Information and Communication

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AFRICA@50: A NEW DAWN



Addis Ababa, 25th May 2013 –

Today, 25th May 2013 is an historic day in the life of all daughters and sons of Africa as they celebrate in unison, the 50th anniversary of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) and the African Union (AU). Indeed, the 50th anniversary comes at a golden time for Africa as the continent, which was perceived a decade ago as a hopeless one, is now unequivocally on the rise. Africa's time has come and generates hope. When the leaders of then independent states of Africa

signed the OAU Charter on 25th May 1963 in Addis Ababa, it was their hope to see in future, a continent liberated from the yoke of colonial domination, united and self-reliant in all respects.

Today, Africa is free, united and committed more than ever to achieve its socio-economic emancipation in the spirit of Pan-Africanism so as to fully realize the dreams of the founders of the Union. It is therefore an opportune time to pay tribute to the heroes and heroines who liberated the continent, take stock of achievements and pave the way for the next fifty golden years to come. As said by Mr Hailemariam Desalegn, Prime Minister of Ethiopia and current Chairperson of the African Union, “the major responsibility of the current generation of Africans is to create a continent free from poverty and conflict. I believe this is the new spirit of Pan-Africanism that should inspire current and future generations to fulfill the dreams of our founders for a peaceful, prosperous and united Africa”.

Along with the entire continent, the Diaspora and the friends of Africa, the African Union is today celebrating the past, present and future through a Grand Debate on “Pan-Africanism and African Renaissance”. However, “as we debate Pan Africanism, fifty years after the OAU was formed, we have to ask some tough questions about our dream for the next fifty years and the Pan Africanist values that continue to inspire us” remarked Dr Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, Chairperson of the AU Commission, in a statement which was received not only by the live audience but also by audiences in Africa and internationally. The tough questions, she said, refer to self-reliance, economic independence, rising social inequalities, integration through modernized infrastructure and industries. To achieve these targets in the future and sustainably

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change the narrative on Africa, Dr Dlamini Zuma urged Africa to “act with greater speed and a sense of urgency to create free trade areas and towards an African Common Market, strengthen the five regions as building blocks of the Union and facilitate the free movement of peoples and goods”.

Commenting on the grand debate on Pan Africanism and looking forward to a brighter future and self-reliance, Ethiopian Prime Minister Mr Hailemariam Desalegn identified five important measures to be taken, namely development of the agricultural sector, building human and technological capability, building infrastructure, promote the private sector and nurture democratic governance and popular participation.

The debate, which marks the beginning a new era for Pan Africanism and African Renaissance was led by Mr Carlos Lopes, UN Under Secretary General and Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA). It evolved around four major areas: better utilization of economic opportunities, the need to have strategies for the future, challenges relating to governance and changing the discourse on Africa, and the issue of inclusion.

World famous and renowned leaders who contributed to the debate were Dr Donald Kaberuka- President of the African Development Bank; Dr Amina Mama - Gender advocate, writer and academic; Mr Donald Patterson- former Prime Minister of Jamaica and Ms Tendai Wenyika- Chairperson of the Pan African Youth Union. Various interventions were made by African Heads of State and Government present.

The outcome of the Grand Debate as well as the recommendations from consultations conducted by the AU Commission with key stakeholders will inform Africa’s Agenda 2063, a framework that will guide the continent’s development over the next 50 years.

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