



**STATEMENT BY**  
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**AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION**  
**AT**  
**SYMPOSIUM**  
**ON**  
***“INTEGRATION AS A FACTOR OF***  
***AFRICAN RENAISSANCE’***

**17-19 May 2011**  
**Lomé, TOGO**

**Your Excellency, Faure Essozimna Gnassingbe, President of the Republic of Togo**

**Your Excellency, Olusegun Obasanjo, Former President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria**

**Your Excellency, Edem Kodjo, President of PAX AFRICANA**

**Excellencies**

**Distinguished Guests**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It is both an honour and privilege for me to participate, on behalf of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, His Excellency Dr. Jean Ping, at the official opening of this very important Symposium organized at the high patronage of His Excellency Faure Essozimna Gnassingbe. His Excellency Mr. Jean Ping could not attend this important Symposium in person owing to other commitments. He, nonetheless, sends his fraternal greetings and wishes the meeting great success.

Please allow me to thank the organizers of this symposium, PAX AFRICANA, for having invited the AU Commission to be part of this extraordinary event. In doing so, I also wish to congratulate them for the grand initiative to organize this Symposium. Special mention goes to His Excellency Edem Kodjo, President of PAX AFRICANA, Former Prime Minister of the Republic of Togo and Former Secretary General of the then Organization of African Unity.

I congratulate you on the appropriateness of the theme of this Symposium, namely: “integration as factor of African renaissance”. We, at the African Union, are convinced that the African renaissance can be channeled through the integration process, which since 2007 Accra Declaration on the Union Government is no longer only economic but also social, cultural and political in nature.

**Excellencies,**

**Distinguished Guests,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

The issue of African integration is not new, having arose from independence , as the expression of African leaders’ will to contain the adverse effects of the balkanization of Africa and overcome all the constraints of small fragmented national markets.

The issue of integration is more than topical now than ever before especially in the context where the world has experienced profound changes and successive crises, including the energy, food, and global financial and economic crises. Today, therefore, integration of our Continent is not an option but a vital and strategic choice for Africa to strengthen her position in the current globalized world, successfully address the global challenges, but also supports efforts for the attainment of the Millenium Development Goals (MDGs)

The development challenges facing the Continent and the various crises experienced remind of us of the need to expedite Africa's integration process through, amongst others, the removal of tariff and non-tariff barriers; the promotion of free movement of factors of production; the scaling up infrastructure development and financing; and harmonization and coordination of macro-economic and fiscal policies. This should help move to more advanced and deeper integration, benefit from economies of scale and mitigate against the impact of future exogenous shocks.

Africa's integration has largely been guided by the Abuja Treaty establishing the African Economic Community and such instruments as the Constitutive Act of the African Union. The Abuja Treaty, for example, clearly stipulates that African States must endeavor to strengthen the Regional Economic Communities, particularly by coordinating, harmonizing and progressively integrating their activities in order to attain the African Economic Community (AEC). In this regard, several positive strides have been achieved in the area of integration. On the part of the RECs, a number have attained free trade areas (FTAs), while others have attained Customs Union status. On the other hand, the EAC is the only REC to launch the Common Market (July 2010). Some progress has also been registered in the area of free movement of persons with the introduction of regional passports, notably in ECOWAS and EAC, and other regional travel and insurance documents. A number of infrastructure projects are also currently being financed or in their genesis consistent with the fact that infrastructure development is fundamental both as a trade facilitation mechanism, helping to reduce the cost of doing business and potentially raising the profile of the Continent as a viable investment location, but also to facilitate the mobility of people.

**Excellencies,**

**Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen**

There are outstanding achievements and important milestones in the on-going work of integrating the Continent. Beyond this progress, a number of challenges still remain. These include lack of adequate financial resources to finance Africa's integration

The problem of overlapping and multiple memberships of the RECs; failure to give up sovereignty on the part of member State; existence of an apparent disparity between commitments and delivery as an evidence in non-implementation and sometimes slow ratification of certain protocols; prevalence of tariff and non-tariff barriers; weak and poor infrastructure (transport, ICT and energy); and problem of peace and security on the Continent. If we are determined to pursue deeper integration, these challenges must be boldly addressed.

**Excellencies,**

**Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen**

In order to accelerate the integration process, the African Union Commission and RECs have jointly developed a Minimum Integration Programme (MIP). The MIP was adopted by African Ministers in charge of Integration during their fourth Conference held in May 2009 in Yaoundé, Cameroon and adopted by African Ministers "as a strategic dynamic framework of the integration process". The MIP is composed of activities and projects in selected key priority sectors or sub-sectors. The MIP is also seen as a tool of convergence between and among the RECs, through which they

could strengthen their cooperation and take advantage of comparative advantages and best practices and experiences of each in terms of integration.

Also, in an effort to accelerate economic integration, the AUC is working on the establishment of the three pan-African financial institutions provided for in the African Union Constitutive Act, namely, the African Central Bank, African Investment Bank and the African Monetary Fund. These African financial institutions have a role, inter alia, to mobilize resources to finance regional integration initiatives and help achieve greater monetary harmonization and deepening the financial sector. In this regard, I would like to inform you that the protocol on the creation of the African investment Bank is under ratification by the Member states and the legal texts of the African Monetary Fund as well as the African Central Bank are currently under preparation.

Several initiatives have also been launched by the AUC in various sectors. These include: the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA); Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development programme (CAADP); African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA); Second Decade of Education; Africa's Science and Technology Consolidated Action Plan; Africa Health Strategy; African Charter on Statistics; and studies on "Alternative Funding Source for the African Union".

**Excellencies,**

**Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen**

In conclusion, I would like to, once again, welcome the holding of this very important Symposium on the Theme: "Integration as a Factor of African Renaissance". We

strongly believe that the Symposium will not only go a long way in contributing to the debate on African Integration, but also provide solutions to some of the challenges to Africa's Integration. I wish to assure you of the AUC's commitment to working in close collaboration with equal-minded organizations like PAX AFRICANA in the realization of the AU vision of a "united, integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa".

Finally, I wish the Symposium great success and thank you all for your attention.