

AFRICAN UNION
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UNIÃO AFRICANA

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, P.O. Box: 3243 Tel.: (251-11)5513822 Fax: (251-11) 5519 321

Email: chairperson@africa-union.org

**Message from the African Union Commission
Chairperson, H.E. Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, on the
occasion of the Conclusion of the Yearlong Golden
Jubilee Celebrations and the 51st Anniversary of the
OAU/AU**

Fellow Africans, Our Dear Friends

One year ago, African leaders from governments, civil society, the arts, students, human rights groups, the media, women's movements, youth organisations, intellectuals, trade unions, academics, and business met at the Headquarters of the African Union, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia to celebrate 50 years since the founding of the Organisation of African Unity.

We were joined in these celebrations by our sisters and brothers in the Diaspora, and our friends and partners from across the world.

We gathered in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia and across the length and breadth of the continent to reflect on Africa over the last fifty years and where we are today. We celebrated our achievements, in particular the successes recorded in liberating the overwhelming majority of Africans from the yoke of colonialism and apartheid. We also acknowledged the long and arduous road of building independent nations and states, whilst defining Africa's place in the world and the route towards African integration.

Throughout the year, we remembered the contributions of the early Pan Africanists, on the mother continent and in the Diaspora, who united into a powerful and enduring movement against dehumanizing slavery, racial oppression and colonialism, for self-determination and laid the foundation for our vision of a United Africa.

As we started the celebrations, we vowed to use the yearlong celebrations to remember our heroes and heroines, to learn lessons from our past and to chart the way forward for the 'Africa we Want'.

One year on, Africa has a stronger sense of herself, her past and present, and the challenges and opportunities we face.

Most importantly, we used our Golden Jubilee celebrations to define the Africa we want. The '*E-mail from the future*', which I wrote to Kwameh Nkrumah was but one contribution. It sparked off an amazing process of reflections and dreams about how Africa can be.

Africans from the north to the south, east to west, young and old, men and women, academics, business, and government officials, the religious sector and civil society, got talking and reflecting on our past, present and future.

These reflections found expression in Agenda 2063, a long-term vision and roadmap for the transformation of African into a continent that is integrated, peaceful, prosperous and people-centred.

Agenda 2063 thus contains a summation of the aspirations of Africans for the future we want, and let me voice some of them:

The young people said: We want a modernized Africa that uses technology to provide services to all people; with modern, fast and sustainable transport, energy and ICT infrastructure, a vibrant green economy and with free movement of people and goods.

We want to be able to study anywhere in the continent, have our qualifications recognized everywhere and be able to work or establish a business in any part of the continent.

The religious communities said: *We want our people to live in peace, to express themselves and their beliefs freely, with tolerance for others' religions. We want our societies to be based on shared values of loving thy neighbor, of solidarity and care for each other. We want accountable government and leadership that involve the people in determining their destiny.*

The women said: *We are more than half of the continent's population and give birth to the other half. We want to be equal partners in building an Africa of peace and shared prosperity. We want our boys and girls to be healthy, to go to school, to acquire post school education, skills and jobs, and opportunities to participate in the future.*

We don't want the pain of not having food to feed our children, or losing our girls to child marriages, or kidnappings or our young people recruited into rebel groups or armed and criminal gangs, or losing our lives whilst giving lives.

Business people said: *We want our economies to diversify and grow, and to make it easy to transport our goods from one country to another, to trade with fellow Africans and to establish strong African business champions in all sectors. We want to invest in new ventures and take risks on the innovation ideas of young entrepreneurs. We need reliable and adequate energy and other infrastructure to grow and expand our businesses.*

The Farmers said: *Since more than 70% of us working in agriculture are women, we need access to land, capital, irrigation, seeds, extension services, storage and transport. We know the land, the seasons, and we know we can feed the continent.*

University students said: *We want to be proud Africans, to compete with the best in the world, to live in a continent that is a success story. We want an Africa that is self-reliant and able to finance its development.*

The African Tourism Ministers said: *we want to capture a much larger share of the global tourism and over the next decades make Africa the preferred tourist destination of the world.*

Workers said: *we want the economy to grow and create jobs, with decent wages, social protection and safe working environments. We want investment and training in the informal economy to increase productivity and grow into the mainstream.*

The small island states communities said: *We want Africa to define and lead in the blue economy; and we want transport links amongst our islands and with the mainland. We want movement on the mitigation and adaptation strategies to help us deal with climate change.*

One of our science publications wrote: *without an African skills revolution, and scaled-up investment in science, mathematics, technology and research, Agenda 2063 won't happen. African leaders must therefore champion the cause of science and technology.*

The African Diaspora: *We want the sixth region to be more than just a slogan, so that we can contribute and build effective links between the mother continent and her diaspora.*

Our artists said: *We want our heritage and culture to be a vibrant part of the Pan African identity and renaissance, we want Africa to reclaim its place amongst the world's leading civilization, with its values of ubuntu, of solidarity, equality, unity in diversity and living in harmony with our natural environment.*

These are but a few of the aspirations for the Future we Want voiced by Africans as we celebrated and reflected over the past year.

Fellow Africans, Dear Friends

Agenda 2063 is however not only about aspirations.

It builds on the historic tenants of the Pan African movement, the continental frameworks of the OAU such as the Monrovia declaration, the Lagos Plan of Action, the Abuja Treaty and NEPAD. It consolidates into a comprehensive framework our sectoral strategies: in agriculture, arts, culture, education, science, technology, social policy, infrastructure, health, industrialization and integration, etc. It takes account of the national and regional developmental plans.

Agenda 2063 will therefore prioritise strategies, identify the key enablers, the capacity required for implementation and how we will finance our programmes.

As a generation that lived to celebrate fifty years since the dream of a United Africa was articulated on 25 May 1963, we are once again taking up the baton.

We are confident that the generations that will celebrate centenary of our continental union in 2063 - our children, grandchildren and great grandchildren - will live in an Africa very different from what we have today.

The journey towards 2063 has started. It will be a long journey and we will climb many hills.

But we will succeed.

I wish you a happy Africa Day!