

AFRICAN UNION

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OPENING REMARKS

BY

**H.E. MR. ERASTUS MWENCHA, DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE
AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION**

**ON THE
LAUNCHING OF THE AFRICAN ONLINE LIBRARY ON LAW AND
GOVERNANCE**

28 November 2013

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Hon. Minister of Justice of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

Hon Representative of House of People's Representatives of Ethiopia

Hon Representative of the Federal Supreme Court of Ethiopia

Distinguished Member States

Distinguished Members of the AU Commission

Distinguished invited guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

I would like to welcome, on behalf of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, H.E. Dr. Dlamini Zuma, and indeed on my own behalf, to the the AU Headquarters and to this beautiful city of Addis Ababa.

I am particularly elated at this launching of the, "African Online library on Law and Governance" as the inauguration of the library is one that is very close to the AU's mandate, which aims to "an integrated, peaceful, prosperous Africa, driven by its own people to take its rightful place in the global community and the knowledge economy" . Before I continue, I would like to thank the organization and those who sacrificed to think beyond themselves and about Africa, including the youth.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to highlight two elements for our quest for integration. We have been exercising our minds on alternative sources of funding for continental development agenda. During this past summit, a decision was taken to explore possible arenas for funding. There is a high level panel chaired by President Olusegun Obasanjo who are exploring the options of taxation as a source of revenue and the second is the establishment of an AU Foundation. We are currently exploring modalities to encourage private sector to finance various integration aspects by embarking on projects that support Africa's integration agenda.

After 50 years, we realized that we have not advanced as much as we should have in the area of integration because integration is about law. We must have legal instruments with which to do so. We also know that resources are required to maintain this project to ensure up to date information so as to keep exposure both relevant and practical to its users. We hope to have a depository of our own.

Education is a critical sector whose performance directly affects and even determines the quality and magnitude of Africa's development. It is the most important means we have to develop human resources, impart appropriate skills, knowledge and attitudes as it forms the basis for developing innovation, science and technology in order to harness our

resources, industrialise, and participate in the global knowledge economy and for Africa to take its rightful place in the global community. It is my hope that people duplicate this model for areas such as science & technology and health for a **well-educated future is a future of prosperity**. We hope to have well educated youth that will lead us toward greater integration for regional integration can only become a reality if we are able to trace the parameters, paradigms, and developing norms and principles in Africa.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is with this in mind I warmly welcome the launching of the African Law Library. A Public library and learning mechanism such as this one are areas of significant relevance for the AU, and finding the best, most sustainable solutions to our challenge requires a relentless pursuit of knowledge. It is my hope that this library will assist the researchers and the general public by creating:

1. A platform for all to interact and exchange ideas;
2. A directory of experts and comparative analysis of law from countries, and any other research fields, ensuring access to information available to the general public.

3. An opportunity for Member States of the Union to share knowledge, access the latest developments in their respective parliamentary libraries, to develop new ideas and to work out a vision to ensure the implementation of the AU development agenda

On behalf of the continent, we cherish this donation to house a library of the knowledge and experiences of Africa.

I THANK YOU FOR YOUR KIND ATTENTION.