

**Keynote Speech
By**

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**Permanent Representative of Ethiopia to the AU and
UNECA and Chairperson of the Permanent
Representatives' Committee**

At

The 15th Meeting of the Africa-EU Joint Task Force

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Addis Ababa**

Co-Chairs,

Representatives of the AU and EU Commissions,

Distinguished Participants,

Colleagues,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me at the outset to express my appreciation for the opportunity given to me, as current Chairperson of the Permanent Representatives' Committee of the African Union, to speak at this important meeting of the Joint EU-Africa Joint Task Force.

I would also like to extend my warmest welcome to those who joined us from the European Commission, the EU External Actions Service, the RECs and other European and African institutions.

Colleagues,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Partnership between Africa and the European Union has no doubt strategic significance to both sides. It is in recognition of this fact that our Heads of State and Government, during the 2nd Africa-EU Summit held

in Lisbon in 2007, agreed to elevate this relation to a new, equal and strategic level. Since then, our relationship has shifted from donor-recipient partnership to a partnership of equals. This is indeed a step in the right direction.

Our meeting today certainly demonstrates our mutual desire to nurture and strengthen this strategic partnership. It provides the two Commissions an excellent opportunity to put their efforts together and come up with innovative ideas and strategies on how best to implement the Joint Africa-EU Strategy and the Joint Action Plan for the years 2011-2013.

Colleagues,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

During the 25th ordinary session of the Permanent Representatives' Committee last month, we have evaluated the progress made and the challenges encountered with regard to the Africa-EU Partnership. Accordingly, we have come to understand that more work needs to be done in order to implement the Joint Action Plan in the eight thematic partnerships and achieve the commonly defined objectives with a view to realizing the full potential of the Joint Strategy in light of the upcoming Africa-EU Summit due to take place in the last quarter of 2013.

Furthermore, we have recognized the need to review the entire implementation architecture and working modalities of the Joint Strategy and improve the Joint Expert Groups' efficiency in monitoring and evaluating the partnership. We have also identified the lack of adequate financing as one of the main factors hampering the implementation of the Joint Strategy and Action Plan and we believe it needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency in order for us to be able to make tangible progress. Therefore, I would like to call upon the two commissions and all other stakeholders to seriously reflect on these issues and come-up with appropriate recommendations, which will help us in addressing those challenges and move forward our strategic partnership.

Having said this, I wish to take this opportunity to assure you of my country's commitment, as Chair of the Union, to spare no effort in the advancement of the Africa-EU strategic partnership. Finally, I conclude my remarks by wishing you all a successful deliberation.

I thank you!