

**Check against Delivery**

**Remarks**

**By**

**H.E. Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus  
Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Federal Democratic  
Republic of Ethiopia and Chairperson of the Executive  
Council of the African Union**

**At**

**The 24<sup>th</sup> ordinary session of the Executive Council of  
the African Union**

**27 January 2014**

**Addis Ababa**

***Excellencies Ministers,***

***Excellency Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, Chairperson of the African Union Commission,***

***Excellency Dr. Carlos Lopes, Under Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Secretary of UNECA,***

***Distinguished Delegates,***

***Invited Guests,***

***Ladies and Gentlemen,***

Let me, once again, welcome you all to Addis Ababa for the 24<sup>th</sup> ordinary session of the Executive Council of the African Union. I wish to express my sincere thanks to the Permanent Representatives Committee for preparing the ground work to facilitate the smooth conduct of our session. I would also like to register my appreciation to Chairperson Zuma and her team as well as the entire staff of the Commission for their hard work.

***Excellencies,***

***Ladies and Gentlemen,***

Last year we lost a world giant - the late President Nelson Mandela. No word can explain our admiration for his life long struggle for freedom. His important thoughts and philosophies on

freedom, justice, peace, equality, forgiveness, reconciliation and unity represent a significant gift not only to the people of South Africa but to humanity as a whole.

Nelson Mandela was indeed a great statesman who will continue to inspire current and future generations in Africa and beyond as we strive to build a better future - a peaceful and prosperous world. We could only honour his remarkable legacy by remaining true to those values that he struggled for throughout his life.

***Excellencies,***

***Ladies and Gentlemen,***

As we start the New Year with a great sense of hope and optimism for the peace and stability as well as the development and prosperity of our continent, Madiba's words of wisdom will continue to guide us. This is what he had stated in his first address, as the President of Post-Apartheid South Africa, during the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the OAU held in Tunis in 1994 and I quote:

*"...Thus do we give reason to the peoples of the world to say of Africa that she will never know stability and peace, that she will never experience development and growth, that her children will forever be condemned to poverty and dehumanization and that we shall for ever be knocking on somebody`s door pleading for a slice of bread?"*

*We know it is a matter of fact that we have it in ourselves as Africans to change all this. We must, in action, assert our will to do so. We must, in action, say that there is no obstacle big enough to stop us from bringing about a new African renaissance."*

This is indeed the spirit that we should all embrace - a can do spirit to overcome the challenges facing our continent and strive for the realization of what we all dream about - the African Renaissance. This was indeed a major topic of our discussion during the first Ministerial Retreat that I was honoured to host in Bahir Dar over the last couple of days and I wish to once again express my satisfaction with the outcome of the Retreat.

***Excellencies,***

***Ladies and Gentlemen,***

Unfortunately, we are meeting against the backdrop of a deteriorating peace and security situation in our continent as a

result of what has been unfolding in South Sudan and Central African Republic. The situation in these two sisterly countries has indeed been very alarming and there is no justification for the continuation of the crises in both places even for a day. Unless we find urgent solution, the situation in these two countries will have serious implications for peace and security in the region and indeed the whole continent. The fact that these humanitarian tragedies are unfolding in the two countries at a time when we are talking about African renaissance must be painful to all of us. Therefore, it is incumbent upon us to help these two African States in restoring peace and stability and addressing their internal challenges.

With regard to the situation in South Sudan, I would like to congratulate the Government and the opposition for signing the Agreements on the Cessation of Hostilities and the Question of detainees. No doubt the problem cannot be resolved through the barrel of the gun. Therefore, I wish to reiterate our call for both parties to fully implement these two vital documents and continue to cooperate, without any preconditions, with the IGAD mediation team to address the root causes of the crisis. The current situation

in South Sudan is a reflection of the challenges that face a post-conflict state and needs to be handled with a lot of wisdom and magnanimity. We all know that the people of this sisterly African State has paid tremendous sacrifices over the last decades and the South Sudanese political actors should rise above their individual interest to save the country from falling into the precipice.

It is imperative that the parties should continue to demonstrate the necessary political leadership and compromise so that the peace process initiated by IGAD and supported by the African Union, the United Nations and all other international partners succeeds. Let me underscore here that the rest of the international community should continue to put its weight behind the regional effort to find a peaceful solution to the situation in South Sudan. I cannot overemphasize the need for unity of purpose among all of us and the international community at large in sending the same message to all the South Sudanese stakeholders so as to achieve the desired result. Of course, this needs to be done in words and deeds.

***Excellencies,***

***Ladies and Gentlemen,***

The situation in Central African Republic remains a matter of concern particularly the senseless violence that has taken a heavy toll on the civilian population. Hence, it was crucial to take urgent action to avert the further escalation of the peace and security situation in that country. In this regard, I welcome the adoption of United Nations Security Council resolution 2127 (2013), which authorized the deployment of the African-led International Support Mission in Central African Republic (MISCA) for a period of 12 months. I also wish to note with satisfaction the transfer of authority from the ECCAS Peace Consolidation Mission in Central African Republic (MICOPAX) to MISCA which took effect on 19 December 2013.

We are all aware of the daunting challenges ahead of MISCA in terms of assisting Central African Republic in restoring peace and security and ensuring a successful transition towards a constitutional order in that country. The international community should remain fully committed to support this fragile state in its

herculean task of stabilizing itself and organizing elections to ensure a successful political transition.

In this regard, we have been following the latest development in that country and we welcome the outcome of the ECCAS Summit that took place in Ndjamena on 9 January 2014. I also wish to note the resignation of the Interim President and Prime Minister and the election of H.E. Ms. Catherine Samba-Panza as the new President of the transition.

***Excellencies,***

***Ladies and Gentlemen,***

With regard to Africa's relation with the International Criminal Court (ICC), the Ministerial Contact Group established pursuant to the decision of the extraordinary Summit held on 12 October 2013, undertook the necessary consultations with all members of the United Nations Security Council individually and collectively to push forward Africa's case. The Contact Group emphatically argued that the cases before the ICC do not solely concern the respected countries alone but have wider ramifications for peace and security in our continent.



The group also made it abundantly clear that the Council has the primary responsibility in the maintenance of international peace and security in accordance with the relevant provisions of the United Nations Charter. Furthermore, in line with article 16 of the Rome Statute, the Council has been bestowed with the power to defer cases before the ICC for twelve months or one year. Therefore, the Group conveyed Africa's request for deferral of the cases.

African members of the Council were entrusted to craft a resolution in line with the Assembly decision of 12 October 2013, and table it for discussion at the Council. However, it is regrettable to note that some members of the Council decided to stand on the wrong side of history by rejecting the legitimate request made by Africa.

I hope the Assembly will thoroughly deliberate on the implementation of its decision on Africa's relation with the ICC based on the report of the Commission and chart a way forward. The report details the work of the Ministerial Contact Group and Africa's participation in the 12<sup>th</sup> Assembly of State Parties to the Rome Statute of the ICC.

It also includes the outcome of the brainstorming session organized by the Commission on the broad areas of the international criminal justice system, peace, justice and reconciliation as well as the impact of the ICC in Africa and the recommendations made on ways and means of strengthening African mechanisms to deal with African challenges and problems.

***Excellencies,***

***Ladies and Gentlemen,***

I am pleased to note that Africa's economic prospect remains strong. There is, however, a clear need to sustain the continent's high growth trajectory over the coming years and decades so as to lift millions of our people out of poverty and ensure sustainable development. That is why we need to bring about structural transformation by promoting economic diversification and industrialization with a view to ensuring inclusive growth and creating jobs for the unemployed youth.

That is precisely what the strategic plan that was adopted by the 21<sup>st</sup> session of the Assembly in May 2013, seeks to achieve over the short and medium term – laying the foundation for the

transformation of our continent. We will certainly have the opportunity to examine the progress made in the implementation of the strategic plan based on the report that the Chairperson of the Commission will present to us covering the past one year.

***Excellencies,***

***Ladies and Gentlemen,***

As you can see from our agenda, we have quite a number of issues that we are expected to address in the coming two days. I, therefore, count on your support so that we could be able to finalize our work as efficiently and effectively as possible.

I conclude my remarks by wishing you a productive and enjoyable stay in Addis Ababa.

I thank you