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PRC MEETING OPENS WITH A CALL FOR AFRICAN SOLIDARITY, DIALOGUE AND MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING



Malabo, 23 June 2011 – The Chairperson of the African Union Commission (AUC), Mr. Jean Ping, has stressed that Africa needs solidarity, unity, and dialogue in order to tackle the many challenges it is facing today.

Mr. Ping was speaking today, Thursday 23 June 2011, at the official opening ceremony of the 22nd Ordinary Session of the Permanent Representatives Committee (PRC) at the Sipopo Conference Center in Malabo, Republic of Equatorial Guinea.

The opening ceremony took place in the presence of the Deputy Chairperson of the AUC, Mr. Erastus Mwencha, the AUC Commissioners, representatives from the diplomatic corps, the international community, the civil society, the private sector and invited guests among others.

Addressing the participants, the Chairperson of the AUC said Africa has proven to the world that, Africans can solve their problems by themselves. He expressed satisfaction over the improved collaboration between the PRC and the AU Commission, saying that, the recent retreat which took place in Nazareth, Ethiopia helped to reinforce the mutual respect and understanding between the two organs of the Union. He reiterated the Commission's commitment to continue in its efforts to improve its financial and administrative management in compliance with the rules and regulations of the organisation.



Mr. Ping underscored the need for Africa to continue to have a common position in issues that affects the continent and speak with one voice so as to command respect for the continent. “In order to achieve this responsibility, the AU will require dynamic, political and material support from its Member States”, he underlined.

“2012 will be a special year... we are determined more than ever before to face the challenges before us...we have to rise up to the challenges...this will require innovation with the fast technological changes in the world” Mr. Ping indicated, calling on the Ambassadors to do their best to meet the objectives of the Union.

Chairperson Ping underscored the willingness of the AU to work closely with its partners, the Regional Economic Communities (RECs), the Pan African Parliament, the civil society, and the private sector,

among others, to help implement the integration agenda and development of the continent.

Taking the floor later on behalf of the government of Equatorial Guinea, Pastor Micha Ondo Bile, Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation and the Francophonie welcomed the African Union delegation saying that his country is proud to host the 17th AU Summit. He hoped that the deliberations of the PRC will be fruitful, “giving the full and positive contribution to the issues on the agenda”. Pastor Micha congratulated the members of the PRC for the work carried out so far on their agenda and for the resolutions to be presented to Heads of State.

According to Minister Micha, for Africa to be strong, there is need for continental unity to promote solidarity amongst the African people. “Africa has reached the level it is today due to a great spirit of cohesion” he said, adding that unity is power. “We have an action plan and a road map adopted to face these challenges.. we need strong support from our partners for positive development”, the Minister noted.

Meanwhile, Minister Micha underlined the importance of having an alternative source of financing for the AU. “I hope the PRC will be able to present different financial alternatives

to be implemented in the short term, with a view to improve the living condition of our populations”, he said.

Speaking earlier, the Chairperson of the PRC, Mr. Ruben Maye Mangué Nsue, Ambassador of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea in Addis Ababa, welcomed his peers in the city of Malabo and presented the work done so far with regard to the agenda items of the Summit. He reported that, ahead of the upcoming Summit, the PRC had already done 70 per cent of its work at the headquarters of the African Union. Ambassador Nsue pointed out that, the PRC had already reviewed most of the working documents and draft decisions in preparation for the 19th Ordinary Session of the Executive Council scheduled to take place from 26 to 28 June 2011. He said this exercise will facilitate the deliberations during the two day exchange of views on the theme of the 17th AU Summit: “*Accelerating Youth Empowerment for Sustainable Development*”.

For more information, consult the African Union website: www.au.int and visit the 17th Summit web page of the AU at the following link: <http://www.au.int/en/summit/17thsummit>

Journalists are invited to cover the official closing ceremony of the 22nd Ordinary Session of the PRC.