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Addis Ababa, Ethiopia P. O. Box 3243 Telephone; 5517 700 Fax: 5511299

Website: www.africa-union.org

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AFRICAN UNION PAY TRIBUTE TO LATE COMMISSIONER ELISABETH TANKEU



Addis Ababa, 20 October 2011 – It was a solemn and pathetic memorial service that was organised by the African Union Commission today, Thursday 20 October 2011, in honor of late Madam Elisabeth Tankeu, Commissioner for Trade and Industry of the African Union.

The ceremony at the headquarters of the African Union in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, was a mixture of condolences to the family and friends of the deceased and strong testimonies by key note speakers who described Commissioner Tankeu as a panafricanist, a visionary and hard working true daughter of Africa who has spent all her professional career at the service of the continent.



The mourning at the African Union plenary hall started with the Union's Anthem, followed by a minute of silence.

Speaking during the memorial service, the Chairperson of the AU Commission, Dr. Jean Ping, presented the achievements of late Mrs. Elisabeth Tankeu. He said as the Commissioner for Trade and Industry, she had the responsibility for initiating and implementing the policies and programmes of the African Union in the two major areas of Trade and Industry, both of which are critical for the achievement of rapid and sustainable economic growth and development in Africa.

In the area of the promotion of intra-African trade and the strengthening of Africa's market integration, Mr. Ping said the achievements of the Commissioner included the facilitation of trade programmes and the strengthening of the coordination and harmonization of Member States and RECs in the mainstreaming of trade policy into national and regional development strategies, among others.

In her farewell message to late Madam Elizabeth Tankeu, the Commissioner for Political Affairs of the African Union, Mrs. Julia Dolly Joiner, who was speaking on behalf of all the AU Commissioners, admitted that it was a difficult task to bid "farewell to someone who was very dear to us, who represented a special and priceless colleague.....Elisabeth Tankeu was one of a kind who will always be remembered by us, her colleagues."

On a different note Commissioner Joiner stated that, Africa has lost a stalwart pan-africanist, who was highly respected for her devotion to duty and commitment to the organization. "As an African, she believed in African ownership of its resources and fairness in trade" she noted.

Presenting the biography of the departed Commissioner, the Secretary General of the Commission, Ambassador Jean Mfasoni said, Mrs. Elisabeth Tankeu was a Cameroonian, trained as an Economist at the University of Paris before occupying different high functions in her country at ministerial level. She was first elected as African Union Commissioner for Trade and Industry in 2003 and re-elected to the same post during the January 2008 AU Summit in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. He said she passed away right at that time when her department is preparing for the forthcoming AU Summit which is holding under the theme: "Boost Inter-African Trade".

Mr. Francois Jean Noël, the Acting Director of the Department of Trade and Industry described his former Boss as the embodiment of commitment, competence and excellence, He said the Commissioner was very kin to see her collaborators give the best to ensuring result base actions. He added that, the assiduity with which the Commissioner carried out her duties and responsibilities has left an indelible mark in the work of the Department which she transformed with her vision and hard work".

After series of prayers and hymns in tribute to the departed Commissioner Elisabeth Tankeu, the Ambassador of the Republic of Cameroon to Addis Ababa, Mr. Ndoumbe Eboule Jacques Alfred, presented a vote of thanks to the AU Commission for organizing the service in memory of a compatriot and former member of the Cameroonian government.

Present at the memorial service were: the Executive Secretary of the (UNECA), AUC Commissioners; Members of the Permanent Representatives Committee (PRC); Members of Diplomatic Corps and the International Organisations; staff of the AUC and sympathizers.