



PRESS RELEASE N° 15 / 18th AU SUMMIT

PRESIDENT THOMAS YAYI BONI ELECTED AS CHAIRPERSON OF THE AFRICAN UNION FOR 2012

Addis Ababa, 29th January 2012 –It was during a closed session of the 18th Ordinary Session of the African Union Summit in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, that the Heads of Government and Government of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) , that President Thomas Yayi Boni of the Republic of Benin was elected Chairperson of the African Union by his peers.

The newly elected Chairperson of the continental organization, will manage the affairs of the Union and represent the AU for a one year mandate.. According to the rotation principle, the Chairmanship of the Union for the year 2012 was to be given to a West African country. Therefore the Heads of State and Government of the AU endorsed the ECOWAS decision for Benin to take the turn at the helm of the Union

The newly elected Bureau of the Assembly is as follows:

- Uganda, 1st Vice-president (Eastern Region)
- Tunisia, 2nd Vice-president (Northern Region)
- South Africa 3rd Vice-president (Southern Region)
- Equatorial Guinea, Rapporteur (Central Region)

Benin is taking over the presidency from President Teodoro Obiang Nguema of Equatorial Guinea whose mandate for the year 2011 has come to an end.

In his acceptance speech, President Yayi Boni underlined priorities of his mandate which includes peace, stability and security so that 2012 « be for Africa a year of blessings, peace and prosperity », he noted. He commended the resilience of the continent more specifically the overall proceedings of the auto determination

referendum which led to the creation of Southern Sudan, the 54th AU Member State; and the ongoing peace and reconciliation process in Côte d'Ivoire. Regarding the theme of the Summit, « Boosting Intra-African Trade », the newly elected AU Chairperson said the solution to the challenges Africa is facing rely upon the Africans themselves. He urged his peers to strive for more stability and security, reinforce continental integration, and promote infrastructure development in order to fight efficiently against poverty. President Yayi Boni concluded his speech thanking the Heads of State and Government for the confidence bestowed on him by choosing him to manage the affairs of the Union for the year 2012. He called for a united Africa to help overcome the challenges of the time.

On a different note, the election of the Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson and Commissioners of the African Union Commission will take place on 30 January 2012.