



Press Release

African Union and World Bank Hold High-Level Consultations



Chairperson Ping (Centre), WB Vice President Obiageli Ezekwesili (to his immediate left) and Deputy Chairperson Mwencha (to the Chairperson's immediate right) – (Photo DIC)

Addis Ababa, 31 January 2011 – On the heels of the 18th African Union (AU) Summit, the African Union Commission (AUC) and the World Bank (WB) held High-Level Consultations at the AU Headquarters in Addis Ababa, on the 31st of January 2012.

The meeting was part of regular consultations on the partnership between both organizations and was chaired by the Chairperson of the Commission, H.E. Dr. Jean Ping, who was accompanied by the Deputy Chairperson, H.E. Mr. Erastus Mwencha, while the World Bank Delegation was led by the Vice President for Africa, Mrs. Obiageli Ezekwesili.

The purpose of the meeting was to follow-up on the theme of the Summit - Boosting Intra-African trade - and review ways and means of enhancing and maximizing the effectiveness of WB support for the AU and Africa, in that respect.

Issues discussed at the meeting included: sub-regional and regional integration and trade; capacity building; agriculture and food security; funding; and mechanisms for the Bank's support to the Commission.

The Chairperson thanked the World Bank for its support to Africa and emphasized the need for Africa's Donors and Partners to follow through on their commitments and pledges to the Continent.

Chairperson Ping thanked Vice President Ezekwesili, who will be leaving her post in May, for her fruitful efforts to improve relations between the World Bank and Africa.

"I commend you for the excellent job you have done to improve relations between the World Bank and Africa. We understand the challenges you may have encountered in the process and appreciate your productive focus and tenacity. I wish you success in your professional pursuits and hope that wherever you go, you will not forget Africa," the Chairperson said.

On her part, Vice President Ezekwesili thanked Chairperson Ping for making time to personally receive her delegation, despite his exhausting Pre-Summit and Summit schedule.

With regard to her tenure at the Bank, Mrs. Ezekwesili said: "Improving relations between the World Bank and the African Union was the most natural thing for me to do. Dealing with Africa as a true partner and not simply dictating policy to the Continent is the right approach. It was not easy but I am proud of what we accomplished by working together and I promise that my successor will continue in the same vein. This is a good time for Africa, as all the key macro-economic indicators suggest. Africa and the African Union must continue to drive the agenda, with more emphasis on economics than politics."

The Vice President assured the Chairperson of the sustained interest and determination of the World Bank to continue assisting Africa's agricultural sector to help achieve food security for the people of the Continent.

Vice President Ezekwesili was accompanied by the Bank's Africa Director of Strategy and Operations, Mr. Colin Bruce, the Director for Regional Integration, Mr. Yussupha Crookes, the Trade Practice Leader, Mr. Paul Brenton, the Trade Programme Coordinator, Mr. Dominique Njinkeu, as well as the Special Assistant to the Vice President, Mr. Ikechi Okorie and three Senior Specialists: Mr. Waleed Malik, Mr. Andrew Roberts and Ms. Aileen Marshall.

Meanwhile, the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson were flanked by the Chief of Staff and Deputy Chief of Staff in the Bureau of the Chairperson, the Chairperson's Political and Diplomatic Advisor, the Economic Affairs Advisor, as well as the Director of Strategic Planning, Monitoring and Resource Mobilization, the Director of Information and Communication and the Special Assistant and Coordinating Officer in the Bureau of the Deputy Chairperson.

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