
Press Release

Chairperson Receives the Credentials of the First Permanent Observer of Panama to the African Union



Chairperson Ping (L) receives the letters accrediting Ambassador Rodrigo Chiari as the first Permanent Observer of the Republic of Panama to the African Union (Photo AUDIC)

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 18 June 2012 --- The Chairperson of the African Union Commission (AUC), Dr. Jean Ping, received in his office at the AU Headquarters on Thursday, 14 June 2012, the credentials of H.E. Mr. Rodrigo Chiari, the first Permanent Observer of the Republic of Panama to the African Union.

Welcoming Ambassador Chiari, the Chairperson stated that the African Union is pleased to establish diplomatic relations with Panama, adding that he looked forward to working with the new Permanent Observer to develop mutually beneficial ties of cooperation. He observed, with delight, that Panama is the second South American country, after Ecuador, to accredit a Permanent Observer to the AU within the last few months.

On his part, the Ambassador thanked the Chairperson for his warm welcome and stated that it was an honour to represent his country as Permanent Observer to the African Union.

He said that Panama is interested in developing its relations with the African Union and AU Member States for several reasons, especially the fact that 15 percent of its population is comprised of people of African descent and that African culture is present in its society through food, music and other areas.

The new Permanent Observer briefed the Chairperson on Panama's economy, which is heavily dependent on international trade. He stated that Panama has the second largest Free Trade Zone in the world after Hong Kong and the biggest in the Western Hemisphere. With a growth rate of 8 to 10 percent per annum, Panama's economy is the fastest growing economy in Central America, despite the country's small population of 3.3 million inhabitants.

"The Republic of Panama is glad to share its experience in global trade with the African continent through its people and organizations. This is a moment of growth in Africa and world trade is a key element of it," Ambassador Chiara said.

Both personalities exchanged views on various issues of common interest, including the peace and security situation in Africa.

The new Permanent Observer of the Republic of Panama is based in South Africa.

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