



## PRESS RELEASE NO. 11 / 19th AU SUMMIT

### 19<sup>th</sup> ORDINARY SESSION OF THE AFRICAN UNION ENDS IN ADDIS ABABA - SUMMIT ELECTED FIRST AUC FEMALE CHAIRPERSON

**Addis Ababa, 16 July 2012** - The Heads of State and Government of the African Union (AU) concluded today, 16 July 2012, two days of intense deliberations on the future of the Union and its achievements over the last six months. The high moment of this Summit was the election on 15 July of the new Chairperson of the African Union Commission, in the name of Dr. Nkosazana Clarise Dhlamini Zuma and the Deputy Chairperson of the Commission, Mr. Erastus Mwencha.



The summit also saw the election of six of the eight Commissioners on Tuesday 16 July, to pilot the affairs of the Commission for the next four years. The election of the last two Commissioners was postponed to the January Summit 2013.

The African Presidents and government representatives exchanged views on the development agenda of the continent within the framework of the 19th Ordinary Session of the AU Summit held on 15 and 16 July 2012 at the new Conference Center of the AU in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia under the theme “*Boosting Intra-African Trade*”.

During the closing ceremony on 16<sup>th</sup> July, the AUC Chairperson-elect, Dr. Dhlamini Zuma was invested in her new functions by Mr. Boni Yayi, Chairperson of the AU and President of the Republic of Benin, during the an oath taking ceremony. In her acceptance speech, Dr. Dhlamini Zuma committed herself to work with determination to ensure that the vision of the organization is translated into reality. She dedicated her victory to all the women on



the continent, calling for unity and cohesion amongst Africans. The newly elected Chairperson of the AU Commission expressed gratitude to the AU Heads of States for choosing her to pilot the affairs of the continent adding that by so doing, they had given an opportunity to the Southern African region to lead the Commission for the first time since the formation of its predecessor, the Organisation of African Unity in 1963.



Addressing the Summit, the outgoing Chairperson of the Commission, Dr. Jean Ping congratulated Dr. Nkosazana for her election. He described her election as “a memorable moment on the continent”, as it is the first time a woman has been selected to be at the helm of the Commission. He thanked the Heads of State for having given him the opportunity to serve the continent during the last four years. “I am proud of the work I have done ...I have played my part and now I take my bow”.

Mr. Ping expressed profound gratitude to President Boni Yayi in his capacity as Chairperson of the AU and to all AU Heads of State for their fruitful contribution to his efforts to develop the continent. He further congratulated the Deputy Chairperson Mr. Erastus Mwencha for his “brilliant” re-election as well as the newly elected Commissioners. The last words of appreciation were to his office staff and all the AU employees for their support all through his mandate as Chairperson of the Commission.



In his closing remarks, President Yayi expressed satisfaction at the successful election of the leadership of the AU Commission, which he said was a milestone in the history of the continent. According to the AU Chairperson, the Heads of State have demonstrated solidarity, unity and brotherhood in finding a solution to the difficult situation the continent faced due to the inconclusive electoral process during the Summit in January 2012. He recognized the patriotic and pan –African vision of Mr Ping in promoting shared values

on the continent. He commended Mr. Ping for his courage, tenacity and availability. He also acknowledged the competence of the new Chairperson elect, Dr. Dhlaminin Zuma, saying that her victory will help to advance the integration agenda of the continent. The 19<sup>th</sup> AU Summit ended with a press conference addressed by the Chairperson of the AU, and the incoming and outgoing Chairpersons of the AU Commission.

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