



 Directorate of information and Communication

The AU launches year long OAU/AU 50th anniversary celebrations

Addis Ababa, 8 April 2012 – Dr Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, Chairperson of the African Union (AU) Commission and Dr Teodros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Ethiopia launched today, 8 April 2013 in Addis Ababa, the celebrations marking the Golden Jubilee of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU). They jointly lit a symbolic torch to kick off the year long celebrations. The torches symbolise *“our desire to reverse the current story line of despair into the real narrative of opportunity and potential”* commented Dr Dlamini Zuma.

The Ministers responsible for foreign relations in AU member states were encouraged to undertake similar events in their capitals so as to officially kick off the celebrations which will be held under the theme of *“Pan Africanism and African Renaissance”*. Receiving the torch on behalf of the Executive Council and the host nation of the Continental May 25 events Dr Teodros Adhanom Ghebreyesus (Minister of Foreign Affairs in the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia), wished that this year of celebration would allow Africa to speak with one voice leading sustained unity.

The event took place at the margins of the 14th Extraordinary Session of the Executive Council which was convened to examine the Strategic Plan of the AU Commission for the period 2014-2017 and the Golden Jubilee of the OUA-AU. Coinciding with the launching of the golden jubilee, the examination of the Strategic Plan was an occasion to reflect on Africa’s self-reliance and on the continent’s need to *“demystify, appropriate and popularize our history, our shared values, our narrative about the state of Africa today, in honor of the generations that went before us and to inspire current and future generations”*.

In this respect, the celebrations will also focus on twelve monthly thematic areas addressing specific areas of progress and challenges on the continent. These include priority areas such as women empowerment, health, education, peace and security, governance and democracy, and food security. The celebrations are set to mobilize African Citizens in the continent and the diaspora to promote *“an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in global arena”*.

“Nobody can teach me who I am. You can describe parts of me, but who I am and what I need is something I have to find out myself” Dr Dlamini Zuma emphasised utilising a quote from Chinua Achebe. The AUC Chairperson concluded by calling on AU Member States and all stakeholders to join the celebrations. *“The current realities and futures of Africa can only and must be developed by Africans for Africans”*.

Contact:

For further information you can mail the Situation Room (africa50@africa-union.org). E-press kits are available at <http://au.int/50th> which include all planned and communication materials.

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