



DIRECTORATE OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION

PRESS RELEASE

Victorian parliament Visit to the AU- A step forward in relations with the continent



**Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; July 21, 2016** -- The Citizens and Diaspora Organization (CIDO) hosted a delegation from the Victorian Parliament of Australia led by its president, Hon. Bruce Atkinson, accompanied by parliamentarians Hon. Ms Wendy Lovell, Ms Christine Fyffe and Mr Anthony Carbines. The delegation paid a courtesy call to the African Union Commission headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia where they were received by representatives from each of the Bureau of the Chairperson, CIDO, Strategic planning and the Directorate of Information & Communication (DIC).

The main aim of the Australian delegation's visit was to gain knowledge on the African Union and its mandate, projects and challenges; establish goodwill relationship between the Australian government and the African Union; and build opportunities in other sectors among them, education and agriculture. The delegation was taken through an extensive explanation on the formation of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and its transition to the AU, the AU structure and its composition, the Constitutive Act of the AU, departments of the AUC, AU partnerships and lastly the AU's long term development agenda, Agenda 2063.

An in-depth account of AU Agenda 2063 was provided by the Agenda 2063 expert from Strategic Planning Department; this included the rationale for the Agenda, its foundation, aspirations and its 10-year implementation plan. Asked how the AU can ensure the practicality and achievement of the aspirations of Agenda 2063, Strategic planning provided a detailed description of the roadmap and frameworks that every aspiration in Agenda 2063 is driven by.

Flowing from the above, CIDO representative gave an overview of the directorate's mandate, divisions, and its current programmes including those in Australia. Some of the activities highlighted include the 2015 visit to Australia where the CIDO representatives met with some of the African diplomatic corps, representatives from the Victorian Parliament and the Diaspora including the launch of a Pan African Australasia Diaspora Network (PAADN). CIDO also provided briefings on the scheduled Diaspora activities such as the Regional Consultative Conference (RCC) in Australia which will serve as a platform of interaction with the Australian Diaspora in developing Diaspora for development projects; The Victorian Parliament expressed their willingness to participate and help host the next networking meeting and RCC in Australia.

Following the presentations, fruitful discussions ensued on the integration of the African continent and the lessons that AU can learn from the EU and BREXIT; youth and development, increasing numbers of African women in parliament; and means to reduce brain drain and create favourable conditions to encourage the return of African migrants.

The visit of the Australian delegation to the African union and many African states is a step forward in relations between Australia and the continent.

**End ###**

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