



## AUC commemorates the African Union Day with celebration of AU achievements



**Addis Ababa, 28<sup>th</sup> September 2016 –** African Union Commission (AUC) today 28<sup>th</sup> September 2016, at its Headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, celebrated the African Union Day, (AU Day) which is held annually on the 9<sup>th</sup> of September. The day commemorates the decision by African Heads of State and Government, to transition from the Organization of African Unity (OAU) to the African Union, as issued in the Sirte Declaration which called for the

establishment of an African Union, with the aim of accelerating the process of continental integration to enable Africa to play its rightful role in the global economy while addressing multifaceted social, economic and political problems compounded as they were by certain negative aspects of globalisation.

AU Day also reflects on the Union's transformation and achievements in the African continent and this year the Commission dedicated its celebrations to the promotion of Human rights under the 2016 theme: "African Union Year of Human Rights with Special Focus on the Rights of Women in Africa". The celebrations coincide with major strides made by the AU towards achieving its goals including, amongst other things, launching the AU Passport, the decision by African states to finance the activities of the African Union through a 0.2% levy on eligible imports, enhancing member states collaboration towards achieving the continent's development agenda as well as the peace and security missions.

The 2016 celebrations took place in the presence of H.E. Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, Chairperson of the AUC, H.E. Mr. Erasmus Mwench, Deputy Chairperson, AU Commissioners, Members of the Permanent Representative Committee, AUC employees and families, former and retired AUC employees, and invited guests.

The celebrations commenced with a ground breaking ceremony and official opening of the new construction site for the AU Integrated Service Center followed by an opening session and official welcome in the Nelson Mandela Plenary Hall

In her welcoming remarks, H.E. Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, Chairperson of the AUC, said that the day is one to celebrate the great diversity of Africa. Dr. Zuma spoke about Africa's future and reiterated the fact that Agenda 2063 which is Africa's 50 year vision, has a major focus on shared prosperity and improved livelihoods and prioritises investment in people, particularly in their health, education, access to basic services as well as growth in agriculture which is a mainstay of the continent and its actualization.



She concluded by urging everyone to take greater steps towards self-sufficiency which can only be achieved through collaborative and collective work and efforts and thanked all staff of AU organs and their representatives, liaison offices, PRC, AUC staff both present and retired and the youth volunteers both past and present.

The celebrations continued with a Plenary Session on “OAU – AU History and testimony”, where panelists addressed the journey and the transition from the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) to the African Union, and the progress achieved thus far on the continent by the Union.

A discussion centered on Agenda 2063 was the focus of a second panel session. The discussion highlighted the role played by Member states, AUC, Regional Economic Communities on the implementation Agenda 2063. The discussions also discussed the importance of incorporating the perspective of African Youth African in implementing Agenda 2063 as they will ultimately be the ones to ensure its future success.

Other events which took place during the AU Day 2016 celebrations included a Bazaar, a Fashion show with various African countries displaying their cultural attire, African Music and Cuisine,

which reflect the richness and diversity of African culture and traditions. Various sporting activities were undertaken including tennis matches between the Defense Force Club of Ethiopia and members of the African Union.

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