



Directorate of Information and Communication

Press Release

The 30th Ordinary Session of the African Union Executive Council kicks off in Addis Ababa

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 25th January 2017: The African Union (AU) Executive Council has emphasised the need for Africa to boost investment in Africa's youth by promoting transformative and inclusive development agendas aimed at recognising the efforts by the youth in entrepreneurship and innovation.

This was stated during the opening of the 30th Ordinary Session of the AU Executive Council today 25 January 2017, at the AU Headquarters, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, under the theme: **“Harnessing the Demographic Dividend through Investments in Youth”**



The opening ceremony was attended by a high level gathering that included: H.E. Dr Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma AUC Chairperson, AU Ministers of Foreign Affairs, AU Commissioners, Dr. Abdullah Hamok, acting Executive Secretary of the UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), officials and invited guests.

Addressing the distinguished delegates at the opening ceremony, the Chairperson of the AU Commission, H.E. Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma said that for Africa to succeed in its integrated and inclusive development agenda“ it requires that we revive and strengthen the spirit of Pan Africanism , unity and solidarity to successfully steer our way towards agenda 2063”.

To meet the 1st target in Agenda 2063 of commencing the Continental Free Trade Area by the end of 2017, H.E. Dr. Dlamini Zuma stressed on the need to unlock the potential, the energy, the creativity and the talent of Africa’s young men and women. She said that this can be achieved only through the African Skills revolution, by creating jobs and economic opportunities, through diversification, agricultural modernisation and industrialisation so that Africa’s youth can be the drivers of agenda 2063.

Dr. Dlamini concluded her remarks by saying “whatever we do at this summit, we must ensure that we preserve the precious and principled unity of this continent and our union”. (See complete speech of the Chairperson on the AU Website: www.au.int)

Hon Minister of Foreign Affairs of The Republic of Chad and Chair of the Executive Council Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat in his opening remarks noted that the 30th Executive council is being held on the back drop of significant changes happening at the African Union commission such as the AU reforms requested by Heads of States in Kigali and the pending AU elections which will be important for the organisation moving forward in meeting its obligations to the citizens of Africa.

The Minister commended the Excellent leadership of the AUC Chairperson and her Commission on championing Africa’s development agenda through the promotion of Agenda 2063. He ended his speech by officially declaring the 30th executive council open. (See complete speech of the Minister on the AU Website: www.au.int)

Dr. Abdullah Hamok, Acting Executive Secretary of the UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), in his opening remarks noted that unlike other regions of the world, the proportion of youth in Africa’s total population was rising and this growth presented great opportunities as relates to the continent’s demographic dividend as well as challenges derived from the risks associated with soaring rates of youth unemployment. (See complete speech of Dr. Abdullah Hamok on the AU Website: www.au.int).

The Executive Council meeting is the second of three statutory meetings to be held under the on-going 28th Summit of the African Union, holding from 22-31 January 2017. The first meeting was that of the Permanent Representatives Committee which was held from 22 to 24 January. The final meeting of the summit will be that of the Heads of State and Government to take place from 30-31 January.

For three days, the Ministers of External Affairs and other ministers or authorities designated by the governments of AU Member States will deliberate on the different reports of the Specialized Technical Committee (STCs) ministerial meetings organised by the AU Commission during the last six months. They will also adopt the report of the Permanent Representatives Committee.

The Executive Council will prepare the agenda of the AU Summit with appropriate recommendations for consideration by the Heads of State scheduled to take place from 30-31 January 2017.

The meeting of the Executive Council will officially end on Thursday 26th January 2017.

For media inquiries contact:

Afrah Thabit | Directorate of Information and Communication | African Union Commission | E-mail: Thabitma@africa-union.org

For further information: Directorate of Information and Communication | African Union Commission | E-mail: DIC@african-union.org | Website: www.au.int | Addis Ababa | Ethiopia

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