



## Press Release N°03/2017

### AUC Chairperson Highlight's four main issues during the African Union Executive Council meeting

**Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 30<sup>th</sup> June 2017:** The 31<sup>st</sup> Ordinary Session of the African Union's (AU) Executive Council, under the theme "Harnessing the Demographic Dividend through Investments in the Youth" was officially opened today 30<sup>th</sup> June, 2017 at the African Union Headquarters, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, ahead of the 29th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of AU Heads of States and Government, scheduled to commence on the 3rd of July 2017.

In his first address to the Executive Council as Chairperson of the AU Commission (AUC), H.E. Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat, focused on 4 main issues namely:- the priorities of the African Union; progress in institutional reform, the need to speak with one voice and the link between decisions reached and the will to implement them

In terms of priorities, and in relation to peace and security, H.E. Mr. Moussa Faki pledged to continue visiting areas where member states continue to face the scourges of wars and terrorism. He recalled that since taking office in March 2017, he had already been to Somalia, South Sudan, the Sahel and the Lake Chad basin.

The Chairperson also highlighted that new approaches of promoting peace are necessary. He called for dialogue, reconciliation and the search for consensual solutions as the only path to peace.

With reference to the theme of the year, H.E. Mr. Moussa Faki said that African youth are hungry for action and want results. "In all the countries I have visited, the fears of women and young people are most poignant", he said; adding that the AU must make decisions that translate this urgent social need into concrete action. Other priority areas highlighted by the Chairperson as needing attention include economic and political governance, investment and migration.

H.E. Mr. Moussa Faki highlighted the importance of giving the African Union the capacity to deal with its challenges. He noted that H.E. President Paul Kagame, President of the Republic of Rwanda is scheduled to present a report on the progress made towards implementing the institutional reforms of the AU. In this regard, the Chairperson expressed his anticipation for the report and commended the "excellent interaction"

between the Commission and the H.E. President Kagame and his team. He also commended the actions by the current Chairperson of the AU H.E President Alpha Conde of Guinea and H.E. President Idriss Deby Itno of Chad, the immediate past Chairperson. He called on the Executive Council to make concrete recommendations to speed up the reform process by the Heads of State and Government at the upcoming Assembly.

H.E. Mr. Moussa Faki reiterated his call for Africa to speak with one voice. “Several events have shown that whenever we have maintained our unity and spoken with one voice, we have won victories”, he said while referencing the election of the AU endorsed candidate Dr Tedros Adhanom to the post of Director General of the World Health organisation.

Finally, on the issue of the relationship between AU decisions and the willingness to implement them, the Chairperson made proposals on how the challenge can be resolved. “Either we take decisions and adopt the texts to apply to them or we defer the adoption of these decisions until we are ready to implement them”.

While making his remarks during the opening ceremony, the acting Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa Dr Abdalla Hamdok noted the timeliness and relevance of this year’s theme in shaping the social, political and economic development debate of the continent.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Guinea, H.E. Mrs Hadja Makalé Camara, thanked the AUC Chairperson for outlining the key focus areas for the Executive Council. She stressed the need for the Council to accelerate the implementation of the AU financing and the continental free trade area to expedite Africa’s self-reliance.

The opening ceremony of the Executive Council meeting took place in the presence of H.E. Mr. Thomas Quartey, Deputy Chairperson of the AUC, Commissioners of the AUC, representatives from the diplomatic corps, the international community, civil society, private sector, invited guests and the media among others.

In its deliberations over the coming 2 days, the Executive Council is expected to discuss the AU budget, review various reports, consider the draft decisions of the Assembly as well as prepare the agenda of the Assembly among other matters.

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