

**AFRICAN UNION**

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## COMMUNIQUÉ ON THE OFFICIAL VISIT OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION TO THE KINGDOM OF SWAZILAND

Addis Ababa, 7 April 2018: At the invitation of His Majesty King Mswati III, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Moussa Faki Mahamat, undertook an official visit to the Kingdom of Swaziland from 4 to 6 April 2018.

During the visit, the Chairperson had discussions with His Majesty King Mswati III on key African Union priorities and other issues of common interest.

He also met with Prime Minister Dr. Barnabas Sibusiso Dlamini, as well as with Honorable Phiwayinkosi Mabuza, MP, Minister of Housing and Urban Development, in his capacity as acting Foreign Minister.

The visit of the Chairperson took place as the Kingdom of Swaziland is gearing up to host a double celebration: the birthday of His Majesty King Mswati III and the anniversary of his country's independence. Accordingly, the Chairperson of the Commission took the opportunity to extend his congratulations to His Majesty and best wishes for successful Jubilee celebrations for the Kingdom.

In the course of their discussions, His Majesty King Mswati III and the Chairperson emphasized the importance of Agenda 2063, as Africa's blueprint for the transformation of the continent and the harnessing of its huge human and natural resources potential, for the benefit of the African people. In this context, they stressed the need to more effectively address the crisis and conflict situations facing Africa, expedite the economic integration of the continent and strengthen its unity.

The Chairperson of the Commission expressed appreciation to His Majesty King Mswati III for his country's support to the institutional reform process. He stressed

the need for continued commitment by all Member States to take forward this endeavor, so as to ensure that the Union is fit for purpose and can fulfill the aspirations of the African people. Key in this regard is the achievement of financial self-reliance.

The Chairperson of the Commission also commended the Kingdom of Swaziland for having signed the agreement on the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and for its role in the successful launch of the Single African Air Transport Market, in January 2018, in Addis Ababa. He looked forward to the early ratification of the AfCFTA by Swaziland and to further progress on other critical aspects of the integration process, including the Protocol on Free Movement of Persons and the African Passport. It is worth recalling that Swaziland played an important role in the negotiations on the AfCFTA, as a member of the Bureau of the CFTA Negotiating Forum. Furthermore, Swaziland is one of the 25 Member States that have signed the Solemn Declaration giving effect to the Yamoussoukro Decision on the Liberalization of African Skies. As such, the Swazi Minister in charge of Transport is a member of the African Union Ministerial Working Group on Air Transport.

His Majesty King Mswati III reaffirmed his country's commitment to the integration of the continent, indicating, in this respect, that steps are underway to table the AfCFTA before Parliament for the purpose of ratification as early as possible. He underlined the importance of ensuring effective follow-up of the decisions adopted by the African Union policy organs, so as to positively impact the lives of ordinary citizens and enhance the socioeconomic prospects of the continent. In the same vein, he emphasized the need to promote common African positions on global issues, so that the continent's voice is heard on the international stage and its views and interests are duly taken into account.

His Majesty King Mswati III reiterated his country's offer to host an African Union Summit in 2020. He assured the Chairperson that sustained preparations and work are underway to create a conducive environment for the successful holding of the Summit. The Chairperson pledged the Commission's full cooperation to that end.

The Chairperson of the Commission expressed appreciation to His Majesty King Mswati for his role as Chair of the African Leaders Malaria Alliance (ALMA). His Majesty the King expressed appreciation to the Commission for its support to this initiative. The African Union Commission and Swaziland will continue to work together towards the goal of eliminating this disease. It should be noted that the

Kingdom of Swaziland is among the countries on track to eliminate malaria by 2020. According to the World Health Organization, malaria incidence and malaria mortality have decreased by more than 40 percent between 2010 and 2015. Swaziland is one of the leading countries in terms of the proportion of the population protected with indoor residual spraying, with a reported coverage rate of 97 percent.

It is to be noted that the African Union, through the NEPAD Implementation Agency, has undertaken a number of projects in the Kingdom of Swaziland in the areas of climate change, agriculture, women empowerment, public health systems, as well as land and water management, to name a few. The African Union has also extended support to Swaziland to facilitate the establishment of a National Internet Exchange Point (Swaziland was the 3rd member state to establish such a system), as part of the Africa Internet Exchange System (AXIS).

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