



Press Release N°085/2019

African Union Celebrates Africa Day and launches memorial wall in honour of African heroes and heroines



Addis Ababa, May 25th, 2019: The African Union Commission (AUC) celebrated Africa Day on May 25th. In his welcoming remarks to the participants, H.E. Kwesi Quartey, Deputy Chairperson of the AUC, said that Africa Day celebrates the formation of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) in 1963, by 32 independent African countries. He spoke about the need for the African continent to continue to support the achievement of the 7 Agenda 2063 aspirations. “Agenda 2063 is a

shared responsibility in achieving the Africa we want if we invest in people, particularly in their health, education, access to basic services as well as growth in agriculture”.

On behalf of H.E. Moussa Faki Mahamat, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, the Deputy Chairperson of African Union Commission in his address said, there is an urgent need for the African continent to come together and forge a common front in order to promote the building of the Africa we want. “We celebrate this memorable day under the AU 2019 theme "Year of Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons: Towards Durable Solutions to Forced Displacement in Africa". He further said the theme in itself sufficiently demonstrates the acuteness of our challenges, and the urgent and imperative need to work together to ensure all African citizens have the inalienable right to live free, dignified and productive lives.



The celebrations featured the inauguration of the AU Memorial Wall in honour of the fallen gallant heroes and heroines of Africa, for their contributions to the wider Peace Support Operations (from Peace building to enforcement) as mandated or authorized by the AU’s Peace and Security Council. The memorial wall will immortalize the names of the continent’s heroes and heroines for future generations to know.

Paying his respects, the Peace and Security Commissioner, Ambassador Smail Chergui said “We remember all their contributions where there was no peace to keep. In most cases they worked under very difficult conditions, with insufficient equipment, in violent and unpredictable environments: preventing the escalation of crises, facilitating humanitarian assistance, protecting

vulnerable civilians, supporting extension of state authority, training of national security forces, and in some cases even protecting critical installations of host governments and personnel. Because of their sacrifice, at the end, there was peace to celebrate and new lives to build.”

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 such as the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), financing of the Union and the institutional reforms.

A panel discussion centered on the theme of the year, “The year of Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons: Towards Durable Solutions to Forced Displacement in Africa” was held. The discussion highlighted the role member states, the AU Commission, and regional economic communities are playing in solving the issue of refugees by ensuring that their human rights are not violated.



Other events which took place during the Africa Day 2019 celebrations included a bazaar and a fashion show, with various African countries displaying their cultural attire, music and cuisine, which reflected the richness and diversity of African culture and traditions. Various sporting activities were undertaken including tennis, volley ball, walking, running and football, where the African Union’s AU1 team won with a 4-1 victory against its opponents, The Awesomes.

The celebrations took place in the presence of AU Commissioners, members of the Permanent Representative Committee, AUC employees and families, former and retired AUC employees, and invited guests.

For media inquiries, contact:

Mrs. Wynne Musabayana | Head of Communication | African Union Commission | E-mail: MusabayanaW@africa-union.org

Mr.Gamal Ahmed A. Karrar | Senior Communication Officer, Directorate of Information and Communication | African Union Commission | E-mail: GamalK@africa-union.org

Mr.Stephen Kwaku Darko| Information and Communications Officer, Directorate of Information and Communication, African Union Commission | Tel: +251(0) 953406832 | E-mail: DarkoS@africa-union.org

For further information contact

Directorate of Information and Communication | African Union Commission | E-mail: dic@africa-union.org | Web Site: www.au.int | Addis Ababa | Ethiopia

Follow us

Face book: <https://www.facebook.com/AfricanUnionCommission>

Twitter: https://twitter.com/_AfricanUnion

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/AUCCommission>

Learn more at:

<http://www.au.int>