

DIRECTORATE OF INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION

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COVID -19, Institutional Reforms and AUC Elections at the centre of discussion of the 41st Ordinary Session of PRC in prelude to the 34th AU Summit

The 41st Ordinary Session of the Permanent Representatives' Committee (PRC) kicked off on 20 January 2021, in the context of the prevailing COVID-19 Pandemic,



ahead of the 34th Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union (AU) scheduled to take place on 6 and 7 February 2021 under the theme of **“Arts, Culture and Heritage: Levers for Building the Africa We Want”**. Addressing the ambassadors in his opening remarks, the Chairperson of the AU Commission, Moussa Faki Mahamat underscored the need for the PRC to put optimal proposals that should support the smooth transition from the old structure of the Commission to the new one. “I am convinced, you will have ironed out all the difficulties, all the rough obstacles on the way to ushering the Union into its new era, that of the successful Institutional Reform, thus attesting to the benefits and advantages of teamwork, executed with

competence, dedication and passion”. Underlined the AUC Chairperson.

Noting that the PRC conducted its meetings last year in extraordinary circumstances due to the Covid-19 pandemic, Chairperson Faki commended the efforts of the PRC, that resulted in the holding of the 37th ordinary session of the Executive Council, the 2nd coordination meeting between the African Union, the RECs/Regional Mechanisms and the Member States, the two extraordinary sessions of the Conference on African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and the holding of a Virtual Summit on the theme of the year **“Silencing the Guns”**. The AUC Chairperson also expressed appreciation to the good collaboration, which exists between the PRC and the AU Commission. Highlighting the AU's theme of the Year 2021 **“Arts, Culture and Heritage: Levers for Building the Africa We Want”**, the AUC Chairperson said it is an important theme and goes hand in hand with the whole

movement for the institutional reform of the Union, “as culture is the main marker of identity and through it we know who we really are”. Emphasised Chairperson Faki. (See complete speech of the AUC Chairperson on the AU website: www.au.int).



On his part, H.E. Edward Xolisa Makaya, Ambassador of the Republic of South Africa and Chairperson of the Permanent Representatives' Committee, in his opening speech, commended the efforts made by the Bureau of the AU Assembly, the Commission and the Africa Centre for Disease Control (CDC) in helping the African continent to face the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Notwithstanding Covid-19, Africa showed incredible determination by conducting and concluding virtual negotiations on complex and difficult matters of the AfCFTA, leading to the successful Johannesburg Extraordinary Summit on 6 December 2020. It is absolutely important to work to implement all the decisions taken at the Summit”. Underlined the Chair of the PRC.

As the Summit is to embark on election of senior leadership of the AU Commission, the PRC Chairperson thanked the current leadership of the AUC for their fortitude, diligence and able stewardship in managing the Commission. PRC Chairperson Makaya also thanked his peers, the Permanent Representatives and their officials for their support and most importantly their friendship during South Africa’s tenure as Chair of the PRC and ultimately Chair of the Union. (See complete speech of the PRC Chair on the AU website: www.au.int)

The official opening ceremony of the 41st Ordinary Session of the PRC virtual meeting, was attended by the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson of the Commission, the AU Commissioners, and Representatives from AU Organs and AU officials. For two days, the ambassadors will deliberate on different reports including: the activities of the PRC Sub-Committees, reports of the Specialized Technical Committees (STCs) held in the year 2020, the reports of the AU Commission, other AU Organs and the AU Specialized Agencies. The Session will finally consider the draft agenda and draft decisions of the 38th Ordinary Session of the Executive Council scheduled to take place on 3 – 4 February 2021, before adopting their report to be submitted to the Executive Council for consideration.

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