



**COMMUNIQUE OF THE TELECONFERENCE MEETING OF THE
BUREAU OF THE ASSEMBLY OF AFRICAN UNION (AU)
HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT
HELD ON 24 JUNE 2021**

H.E President Felix-Antoine Tshisekedi, President of the Democratic Republic of Congo in his capacity as Chairperson of the African Union (AU), convened a teleconference meeting of the Bureau of the Assembly of the African Union Heads of State and Government on 24 June 2021.

The following members of the Bureau participated in the teleconference meeting: President Macky Sall of the Republic of Senegal, President Azali Assoumani of the Union of Comoros, and President Matamela Cyril Ramaphosa of the Republic of South Africa. H.E Mostafa Madbouly, Prime Minister represented the Republic of Egypt.

His Excellency, Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, participated in the meeting at the invitation of the Chairperson of the African Union only to hear the briefing point of the Chairperson of the African Union on the Ethiopian Renaissance Great Dam (GERD) negotiations.

The Chairperson of the African Union Commission, H.E Moussa Faki Mahamat and the Director for the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC), Dr. John Nkengasong, also participated in the meeting.

In his opening remarks, H.E President Felix Tshisekedi welcomed all to the second meeting of the Bureau of the Assembly, outlined the objectives of the meeting and highlighted the key activities undertaken by the African Union under his Chairmanship from January 2021 to date. H.E President Felix Tshisekedi paid tribute to the late Mr. Kenneth Kaunda, former President of the Republic of Zambia for his pan-Africanism and exceptional service to his country and continent.

1. ON THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC SITUATION

The Bureau of the Assembly of AU Heads of State and Government took note with appreciation, of the detailed briefing on the status of COVID-19 on the Continent as well as the continental response to the pandemic, presented by H.E Matamela Cyril Ramaphosa, AU Champion for the COVID-19 Pandemic Response and complemented by the Director of the Africa CDC, Dr. John Nkengasong.

The Bureau of the Assembly expressed profound gratitude to H.E President Ramaphosa for his relentless efforts and commitment in effectively leading the

continental response to COVID-19 and pledged continued support of the Bureau in this regard.

While the Bureau of the Assembly of AU Heads of State and Government recognized the progress made in the fight against the virus, they expressed serious concern with the sharp upsurge in the number of COVID-19 cases and fatalities recorded across the Continent.

The Bureau of the Assembly noted that COVID-19 pandemic is a public health emergency of international concern which has created an additional burden to Africa's public health systems and negatively impacted the economic, social and humanitarian efforts of the Continent. The Bureau emphasized the need for the African Union to intensify efforts for the acquisition of COVID-19 vaccines in order to achieve the continental target to vaccinate at least 60% of the population by 2022.

The Bureau of the Assembly renewed their call to intensify efforts for vaccine production on the Continent and in this regard welcomed the first COVID mRNA vaccine technology transfer hub to be established in the Republic of South Africa. Local production would expand accessibility to vaccines for Africans, improve response to health emergencies and strengthen continental health security.

The Bureau of the Assembly commended the work of the Africa Vaccine Acquisition Task Team (AVATT) under which the continent successfully secured up to four hundred (400) million doses of the Johnson and Johnson single-shot COVID-19 vaccine. The Bureau welcomed with deep appreciation, the World Bank's decision to partner with AVATT to accelerate COVID-19 vaccinations for up to 400 million Africans.

Further, the Bureau of the Assembly expressed gratitude to the Master Card Foundation for the donation of 1.3billion dollars to support the African Union and Africa CDC to vaccinate millions of Africans and assist with the Continent's economic recovery over the next three years.

The Bureau of the Assembly acknowledged the efforts of Member States in fighting COVID-19 pandemic and encouraged them to continue working in solidarity until the virus is completely eliminated from the Continent. They welcomed the proposal for the establishment of the AU Commission on COVID-19 Response which will support the work of the AU Champion. The Bureau requested the Commission to draft the relevant decision in this regard.

The Bureau of the Assembly welcomed and endorsed the proposal by H.E Matamela Cyril Ramaphosa to issue a communique on the COVID-19 pandemic situation on the Continent, in his capacity as the African Union Champion for the COVID-19 Pandemic Response.

Cognizant of the worsening situation of the pandemic on the Continent, the Bureau of the Assembly decided to convene an Extra-Ordinary Session of the Assembly on the COVID-19 pandemic.

2. ON THE PEACE AND SECURITY SITUATION IN AFRICA

Following a detailed presentation by H.E Moussa Faki Mahamat, the Chairperson of the AU Commission, the Bureau of the Assembly of AU Heads of State and Government expressed deep concern regarding the peace and security situation in Libya, the Sahel and Lake Chad Basin, Chad, Mali, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Horn of Africa and Mozambique.

The Bureau of the Assembly acknowledged the African Union and the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) for their continued commitment and efforts in finding lasting solutions to the peace and security crises on the Continent. The Bureau encouraged the Peace and Security Council (PSC), working with the Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution (RECs/RMs), with the support of the African Union (AU) Commission to continue enhancing efforts to prevent, manage and resolve conflict and crisis situations.

H.E President Felix-Antoine Tshisekedi Chairperson of the African union gave substantial additional information on the evolution of the security situation in the provinces of Ituri and North Kivu following the establishment of the state of emergency and consequent measures. He recalled the improvement of the security situation in the concerned provinces but raised concerns of the consequences of the volcanic eruption of Nyiragongo which severely affected the city of Goma and its surroundings, causing significant displacement of populations.

The Bureau of the Assembly affirmed that solidarity among AU Member States is a key component in tackling the on-going peace and security challenges, and called upon all Member States to spare no efforts to promote peace and security on the Continent while providing African solutions to African problems.

3. ON POSTPONEMENT OF THE JUNE/JULY 2021 SUMMIT MEETINGS

Following the presentation by the Acting Secretary to the Commission the Bureau of the Assembly considered and endorsed the recommendation by the Permanent Representatives' Committee (PRC) to postpone the June/July 2021 Summit meetings as follows:

- ❖ 42nd Ordinary Session of the PRC: **27 September – 01 October 2021**, AU Headquarters, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia;
- ❖ 39th Ordinary Session of the Executive Council: **13 – 14 October 2021**, Ndjamena, Republic of Chad;

- ❖ Mid-Year Coordination Meeting between the African Union, the Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms: 16 October 2021, Ndjamenana, Republic of Chad.

Members of the Bureau raised matters pertaining to the political situation in Chad regarding the holding of the upcoming Summit. While wishing increasing stability in Chad and the successful implementation of the Transition Charter, Members suggested an alternative solution (Plan B), to optionally be considered.

They also decided that a second Evaluation mission to be conducted in order to assess the security and health situation in Ndjamenana, Republic of Chad for a better holding of the Summit in this country.

To this end, the Bureau decided that an extended Bureau of the Assembly meeting with the Chairs of the REC's closer to the time shall review and decide on the format and venue of the sessions of the Executive Council and the Mid-Year Coordination Meeting between the AU, the REC's and the RMs, based on the assessment of security situation and the Technical advice of the Africa CDC on health related requirements.

Finally, the Members of the Bureau requested to be regularly informed of the progress on the preparations for the mentioned Summit.

The Bureau of the Assembly of AU Heads of State and Government requested the PRC and the Commission to take necessary measures to ensure that the meetings are held on the aforementioned dates.

4. ON THE GRAND ETHIOPIAN RENAISSANCE DAM (GERD)

The Chair of the Assembly informed the Members of the Bureau that he continued his facilitation mission concerning the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD); that he convened a ministerial meeting which was held in Kinshasa from April 3-6, 2021 with the participation of the three Parties: Egypt, Ethiopia and Sudan.

The Chair of the Assembly reported that he traveled respectively to Cairo, Khartoum and Addis Ababa, during the week of May 9, where he had encouraging bilateral talks. with the Heads of State and Government of three countries visited.

He also indicated to the Bureau of the Assembly that he is continuing consultations with a view to moving the process forward.

He further pledged to continue his efforts in engaging with the various parties as soon as possible.

The Bureau of the Assembly agreed to remain seized of the matter.