

AFRICAN UNION

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SIXTH AFRICA-EUROPEAN UNION SUMMIT

17 FEBRUARY 2022

BRUSSELS

**SPEECH OF H.E. MOUSSA FAKI MAHAMAT
CHAIRPERSON OF THE AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION**

Excellencies Heads of State and Government,

Mr President of the Council of Europe,

Madame President of the European Commission,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Here we are, at last, after an ordeal, physically reunited in Brussels for the long-awaited 6th African Union-European Union Summit. There is no doubt that the warmth of the reunion will inject new energy into our beautiful friendship, which has been sculpted, at times, in pain, but also in the triple crucible of history, geography and the destiny of our peoples.

I would therefore like to welcome the presence of the leaders of our two Continents and salute the perfect organization of these meetings. Thank you Ursula, for the excellent work of your teams.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

The occurrence of Covid 19, more than two years ago, has profoundly shaken up certainties and almost raised serious doubts about the fate of our humanity, its values of solidarity and generosity, and even around the continued existence of today's universal civilization.

Reassured by optimistic growth assumptions, Africa was then pursuing, thanks to endogenous efforts combined with favorable exogenous factors, the momentum of its upward momentum within the framework of the orderly and progressive implementation of regional integration programs deeply inspired by Agenda 2063. Suddenly, the signals of the loosening of the constraints that were the basis for relative faith in the future were extinguished. Structural fragilities then surfaced.

Of course, the Covid-19 pandemic darkened the picture, amplified fears, and disrupted the circuits and networks of international trade on which the Continent remains, alas, largely dependent. Despite the widespread dread, Africa has shown exceptional

resilience. It has demonstrated that behind the obvious fragility, deprivation, precariousness, and shortages, the soul and fabric structuring the cultural, psychological, and mental universe of the African have given us a strength of resilience like no other.

The international competitions and rivalries, the obvious deficiencies of a rational, fair and inclusive governance, have opened the way to all kinds of political and intellectual deviance.

The anti-constitutional changes of government, of which such a situation is a breeding ground, defy with unacceptable arrogance all the mechanisms that make up the African architecture of norms in terms of democracy and governance.

On the economic front, domestic savings fell by 18%, while remittances from abroad fell by 25% and foreign direct investment fell by 40%, all against the backdrop of a significant decline in tax revenues.

The scarcity of financing despite its immense potential availability reinforces the haunting question of economic recovery. The fact that our partnership has not been able, until now, to fully achieve this possible mobilization in favor of a real reconstruction and modernization plan, is frankly distressing.

What could be more urgent than to take up this immense challenge to intelligence, inventiveness, our talents for innovation and our common interests?

I know, by the way, that the crux of the matter is not the availability of funding, but rather the gathering of political will to guarantee the best allocations and, above all, the systems of a fair and supportive global governance.

It is certainly gratifying to note the broad consensus on the priorities in the areas that structure our common hopes, which are: innovative financing, connectivity/digitization, infrastructure, climate change, energy transition, vaccine production, agriculture and sustainable development, education, vocational training,

migration and mobility, economic integration, peace, security and good governance.

We must now go well beyond the mere theoretical and incantatory formulation of our relevant priorities.

Although this declaratory Euro-African convergence is certainly an indicator of coherence in a common strategic vision, it is lacking, however, why hide it, in a real gap between its discursive formulations and its factual, practical, real-life transforming effects.

Although our preparatory discussions for this Summit were more diversified, better articulated and conducted, they cannot hide, beyond our convergences and the solidity of our consensus on priorities, nuances of sensitivity gaps. Africa is developing a diversity of partnerships that does not have the same history nor the same scope as that of our partnership with Europe. These new partnerships are no less relevant and beneficial for Africa and, from this point of view, are worthy of respect and consideration.

The hierarchy of priorities is another aspect where the nuances are expressed. Where, in the pyramid, for example, should the structural transformation of African economies be situated in relation to the very transformation of political values, models and systems?

What place to be given to the training of young Africans and their mobility for knowledge? How to hide the shades of difference that exist on the issues of ecological transition and fossil fuels?

Mr. President of the Council of the European Union
Mr. President of the African Union
Ladies and Gentlemen

The progress made so far by the African Union-European Union Partnership, has given rise to a concern about how to effectively and efficiently carry out the various activities included in the Plans of

action. The visibility of the Partnership can only be reflected in tangible results. This concern about the how challenges our common thought. As such, the African Union, for its part, would like to share its approach on this important aspect.

Two parameters could be jointly taken into account, namely, on the one hand, the financing mechanisms and on the other hand the follow-up and evaluation mechanisms of the projects/programmes.

As the traditional mechanisms have clearly shown their limits, our two Unions are called upon to invent new ones that are more flexible, more efficient and more result-oriented. Above all, they will have to cooperate more effectively in the fight against illicit financial flows and repatriate the funds resulting from such flows to Africa.

The good practice of periodic and regular evaluation deserves to be quickly taken into account, because it offers the benefit of facilitating the necessary circumstantial adjustments and envisaging the future with more assurance and control.

Our Summit, today, has given rise to great hopes. The expectations it raises among Governments, elites and peoples of both Continents are real. Will it be, through its innovative and courageous decisions, this summit of a renewed, revitalised Partnership, nurtured by a new soul of pragmatism, generator of concrete, structuring and transforming projects, whose preparatory work was marked by expectation? Will it be able to rebuild the Africa-Europe relations, whose solid base urges adaptation to the dizzying global evolution where the exigencies for rationality, technicality, transparency, accountability, equality are the real parameters of performance and modern governance?

The response to this "ardent obligation" is the soul of our strong wish for the success of our Summit.

I thank you.