

## INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION DIRECTORATE

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### Ms Nardos Bekele-Thomas, Takes Office as New CEO of The African Union Development Agency-NEPAD

Ms Bekele-Thomas is the first woman to lead the African Union's development agency. She was appointed and endorsed as the new Chief Executive Officer of AUDA-NEPAD by the African Union Heads of State and Government during the Thirty-Fifth Ordinary Session of the African Union summit, in February 2022. She succeeds Dr Ibrahim Assane Mayaki as CEO of AUDA-NEPAD.



"It is heartening to see the level of support for Heads of State, members of the NEPAD Steering Committee and the African Union Commission. I would like to express my gratitude to the Chairperson of the NEPAD HSGOC H.E President Kagame, H.E Moussa Faki Mohammed, all the AUC Commissioners and Dr Mayaki. I am humbled to be the CEO of AUDA-NEPAD and the expectations are very high," Ms Bekele Thomas said during the handover retreat convened with members of the NEPAD Steering Committee.

She noted that, the continent have been faced with current challenges, but it is a good ground to be ready to anticipate and meet future challenges. According to **Ms Nardos Bekele**, creating more agility in Africa's development agency, since the world as it is, is a world of crises. Agenda 2063 needs to become an agenda of the people of Africa – one that is owned by all and truly each one of us has a co-responsibility.

Members of the NEPAD Steering Committee welcomed the appointment of Ms Bekele-Thomas, noting that she has consistently, over the years, been promoting human development on the continent that is underpinned by principles of economic, social and political rights for all. They also took the opportunity to recognize former CEO Dr Mayaki's role in the transformation of the NEPAD Secretariat into the continent's development agency – AUDA-NEPAD, as well as his sterling role in supporting the development of Africa through various interventions.

Ms Gnounka Diouf, Co-chair of the NEPAD Steering Committee and Ministerial Advisor to the President of Senegal, also welcomed Ms Bekele-Thomas and assured her of the support of Senegal, pointing out that, "The value to NEPAD is especially through the leadership from Heads of State."

"Dr Mayaki has been instrumental in transforming NEPAD Secretariat to AUDA-NEPAD, and as we welcome Madam Bekele-Thomas, we assure you of our greatest support," H.E Elhmedi Salah, Chair of the NEPAD Permanent Representatives Sub-Committee reiterated.

“Leaders on this continent have come to see NEPAD become a reality. Today, the secretariat is now the African Union Development Agency-NEPAD, which is unique in the world. It is the only continental development agency in the world, covering 55 countries,” Dr Mayaki stated. “I congratulate Ms Bekele- Thomas once more wholeheartedly as she takes up her role as AUDA-NEPAD CEO. It is an honour to hand over the baton to an incredible Africa-enthusiast with outstanding experience and knowledge,” said Dr Mayaki.

### Note to Editor

Ms Bekele-Thomas was previously the Senior Director of the Office of the United Nations Secretary- General. She also served as Resident Coordinator for the United Nations in South Africa and as Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative in Kenya and Benin. Prior to that she served for over four years in Kenya as Deputy Resident Representative. She is the author of several papers and monographs, and she is fully bilingual in French and English. She has excelled as a Private Sector Policy Adviser focusing on the promotion of trade and investment in several African countries through private/public sector partnerships in the United States. Ms Bekele-Thomas has also served in a technical and advisory capacity in which she helped initiate and conceptualise a pro-poor programme on the Social Dimensions of Development, and has served in various other capacities in the international development space.

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