

AFRICAN UNION

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Introduction of the President of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, His Excellency, General Mohamed Ould Abdelaziz and Chairperson of the African Union, on the occasion of the President's visit to the African Union Headquarters

Addis Ababa, 26 February 2014

President of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, His Excellency, General Mohamed Ould Abdelaziz and Chairperson of the African Union

The Foreign Minister of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania and Chairperson of the Executive Council, His Excellency Ahmed Ould Teguidi

Deputy Chairperson Erastus Mwencha and fellow Commissioners

Directors and members of the AU Commission Staff

On behalf of the African Union Commission, I would like to warmly welcome the Chairperson to the Headquarters of the African Union and to the Nelson Mandela Hall.

We are inspired by your initiative to engage with the AU Commission, as you start your term at the helm of our continental Union. A strong working relationship between the Chairperson of the Union and the AU Commission is critical to the continent achieving the goals for the year.

Your Excellency, you have the reputation as a leader of determination, as being practical and driven by action. In addition, having served in AU High Level panels and committees on Cote d'Ivoire and Libya, we have witnessed your ability to build consensus, your commitment towards African solutions to

problems, and to the collective security and peace of the continent.

Mauritania as a country is making steady progress in building common prosperity for its people, with important achievements over the last decade in education, in life expectancy and in agriculture. We also note efforts towards empowerment of women, with 19.2% of Members of Parliament being women.

As we therefore implement our plans to move forward our agrarian revolution in the Year of Agriculture and Food Security, we hail your commitment towards the practical steps to be taken to make this a reality; including irrigation, which you spoke about during your address to the Union at the January Summit.

As we therefore conclude the 50th Anniversary of our Union and look towards the next fifty years, these are leadership characteristics that will ensure that we move forward decisively.

Your Excellency

Amongst the tasks for this year is to finalise Agenda 2063, as a consolidation of our Pan African aspirations and frameworks. It must enable us to translate our noble ideas into action, so that we speed up the building of an Africa that is integrated, peaceful, prosperous and people-centred.

As Chairperson of the Union, we rely on you as you undertake the task of uniting our Union, of building consensus and collective action amongst all Member states and amongst our continental leaders. Rest assured, Your Excellency, that you have the full support of the Commission in these endeavors.

In conclusion, the last time Mauritania held the Chairpersonship of the OAU was in 1971. Under Mauritanian leadership, the OAU appealed to the United Nations on behalf of Namibia and rejected any dialogue with the apartheid regime in South Africa. This was a sign of commitment to the core mission of the OAU, to complete the decolonization project.

We look forward to the same determination, which has characterized Mauritanian leadership of our Union, and once again, Mr. President, you are most welcome and feel at home.