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Statement of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission,
HE Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma

to the

AUC-UNECA-ADFDB-RECS COORDINATION MEETING

11 May 2015

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

AUC Deputy Chairperson Erastus Mwencha and AU Commissioners

Dr. Abdullah Hamdok, Deputy Executive Secretary of the UNECA

General Secretary of COMESA, Dr. Sindiso Ngwenya, and of General Secretary of the EAC Dr. Richard Sezibera

Executive Secretary of the African Capacity Building Foundation, Prof Emmanuel Nnadozie

Representatives of the African Development Bank

Representatives of the other Regional Economic Communities

Representatives of the Nepad Coordination Agency

AU Commission Directors and Staff

Ladies and Gentlemen

The regular Coordination meetings between the Regional Economic Communities, the building blocks for integration, and the continent's three premier institutions, the African Union Commission, the African Development Bank and the UN Economic Commission for Africa, is an important working mechanism, to jointly strategise and check on progress on our common mission – the integration and development of the continent.

Since we last met in December 2014 in Sandton, Johannesburg a number of important developments have taken place.

Firstly, the Ebola crisis in West Africa at the time was still raging, and we reported to you about the plans to upscale the deployment of African health workers through ASEOWA. AU Member states and regions contributed to the deployment of over 800 health workers.

We can now see the progress made, with Liberia having reached Ebola-free status a few days ago, and Sierra Leone and Guinea both reported the lowest weekly rates of infection in 2015.

We will stay the course until all three are Ebola free as we are also helping the countries to restart their health services.

We have a plan, discussed with the three countries, of drawing down ASEOWA, but we must once again thank our Member states, especially countries of East, Central, Southern and West Africa, that contributed the bulk of the health workers.

The fight against Ebola is an example what we can achieve if we work together, especially between the RECs and AUC. We are also working on the operationalization of the ACDC, building on existing capacities and experience we gained.

We have also seen the tragedies of the ongoing deaths of migrants in the Sahel and the Mediterranean sea and the up flare of xenophobic violence in South Africa. It is in my view that Africans are not xenophobia, but these are about the fight over scarce resources and opportunities. It is the same reason that makes the Mediterranean becoming a mass grave for Africans.

These events are a call action for us to renew our efforts to create opportunities for all African people, especially our young men and women, to have access to economic opportunities, and to safety and human security.

In particular, it is a clarion call to be decisive about industrialization and value-addition, about agro-processing and about intra-African trade and investments. We therefore look forward to the Tripartite meeting, to the launch of the Continental Free Trade negotiations in June this year and to the Africa Economic Platform dialogue we are convening in August with business and academia.

Excellencies, unless we invest in the African people, unless we stop exporting jobs along with the raw materials that leave our shores; our people will continue to follow these jobs, using perilous routes in search of a better life.

Our Coordination meeting today will therefore discuss the 1st 10 Year plan of Agenda 2063, focusing on the priority areas we have identified such as skills, education and technology. Talking to our partners last week, asking the question “how is it that Europe (and Japan) are spending billions of dollars on robotic research to replace human labour, whilst hundreds of Africans are dying on their shores. Why not help to skill our young people, and they can then work their as skilled workers in these countries.”

In this context, the empowerment of women and young people remain central, and since we are celebrating 2015 as the Year of Women, looking at the concrete actions to change the lives of African women and girls everywhere.

Excellencies

We have asked the African Capacity Building Foundation to do a study on the capacities needed to implement Agenda 2063, and our Finance, Economy and Integration Ministers in March this year looked at the financing of Agenda 2063.

The Nepad Coordination Agency is convening a technical meeting shortly to take forward the recommendations from the Report on Illicit Flows.

We have on the agenda of this meeting the issue of the roles and responsibilities, and the division of labour between the AUC, the Nepad Agency and the RECs, so that we can optimize implementation and coordination. This is a critical issue in our quest not only for integration, but also for effectively taking forward our agenda. We need a dynamic and open discussion on this matter.

We will report on progress on the Agenda 2063 flagship projects, that we were mandated to explore and take forward.

Furthermore, we are going to assist the 12 of our Member states who asked us to help with the domestication of Agenda 2063.

We remained determined that by 2020 we shall have silenced the guns. To do this, both the AUC and the RECs need to take bold steps, addressing the root causes of conflicts. There will always be conflicts, but it should not be solved

through the barrel of the gun. We must have early warning systems, and bold mechanisms to deal with them before they resort to guns.

There is something that really sits very heavy in my heart, and that is South Sudan. Yesterday was Mothers day, and our hearts go out to the women and children of South Sudan, with over 100,000 refugees forced to flee their motherland because of renewed fighting.

EAC will be meeting later this week on the situation in Burundi, which is of deep concern to all of us, to ensure a peaceful resolution.

Our journey towards 2063 is in progress.

I wish this meeting all success and look forward to robust deliberations.