



2<sup>nd</sup> AFRICA-INDIA SUMMIT FORUM  
**ENHANCING PARTNERSHIP: SHARED VISION**  
Addis Ababa 20-25 May 2011

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DIRECTORATE OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION

**STATEMENT BY THE AUC DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON,  
MR. ERASTUS MWENCHA**

**India-Africa Media Partnership Symposium : Building Bridges  
21<sup>st</sup> May 2011,  
Venue: Harrar Hall, Hilton Hotel, Addis Ababa**

**Dear Representatives of the African and Indian Media,**

**Distinguished participants**

***Ladies and Gentlemen,***

A partnership with the Media as the title of this symposium indicates is very important for the building of a safer world. The media is a critical partner through its ability to report on and analyse issues ranging across the full socio economic and political spectrum. As media practitioners, your role is to promote and raise awareness on the different activities that will be carried out jointly by the African Union and the Indian Government with the framework of the Africa-India partnership.

As you are aware, the Second Africa-India Summit Forum which will hold on 24 and 25 May 2011, at the headquarter of the AU Commission under the theme « *Enhancing partnership shared vision* », falls within the framework of the partnership between Africa and India. It is a follow-up of the first Africa-India Forum which took place in New Delhi from 4 to 9 April 2008 during which the New Delhi Declaration and Framework of Cooperation was adopted.

Africa and India are deeply conscious of their age-old ties at the people to people level. As neighbors across the Indian Ocean, Africa and India are in favour of providing greater

connectivity between the countries of Africa and India and to increase the level of popular exchanges.

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

**With regards to Freedom of Expression and Press Freedom:**

The African Union Commission has undertaken to make media development and press freedom in the continent amongst other things, a tangible and irreversible reality; We have also committed ourselves to the protection of the journalists from undue intimidation and harassment, ensuring their safety, their physical and moral integrity while encouraging the practice of freedom of expression and free access to information as a fundamental right enshrined in Article 9 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights. This commitment is reaffirmed in the Declaration on Freedom of Expression adopted by the African Commission on Human and People's Rights at its 32nd Ordinary Session, held in October 2002 in Banjul, The Gambia.

**The Panafrican media portal:** This is a new development in the area on the African Media Landscape currently being developed by the Directorate of Information and Communication of the African Union.

In order to help African media participate effectively and efficiently in the development efforts of the continent, the AU Commission has partnered with key players to develop a world class web platform that will serve as central point to access information about the fast changing African media landscape. This platform will gather information about media houses; list the national legislation of AU Member States on media, present journalism and communication schools, and provide a full list of all relevant media stakeholders in each African country. It is a new concept that will provide the hub of all African media information, and contacts, including the Diaspora. The partnership with India media will widen the scope of the media portal to ensure good coverage of issues emanating from Africa and India.

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

**In the area of Information and Communication Technology,**

Africa has immense regard and admiration for the strides made by India in the development of its information and communications technology. Africa and India recognize the importance of an early introduction of information and communication technologies as key enablers of capacity building for youth and for poverty eradication and accelerated growth.

**The Pan-African E-Network Project for Tele-education and Tele-medicine is one good example:**

The Pan-African E-network Project is a joint initiative between the Indian government and African Union (AU) to develop ICT infrastructure across the continent. It is aimed at using the Indian expertise in information technology to bring benefits of healthcare and higher education to all countries of Africa.

The main objective of the tele-medicine network is to share the knowledge of Indian medical professionals with their African counterparts through online training programmes for nurses, paramedical staff and other health workers.

The Network will be connected by a satellite/fibre optical network known as VSAT network to provide tele-medicine, tele-education connectivity and other services to the 53 member countries of African Union.

Africa recognizes the important contribution made by the Pan-African E-Network Project to African countries. Both Africa and India commit themselves to taking the lessons of the implementation and efficacy of the Pan-African E-Network Project further, so that the digital divide can be bridged and the socio-economic benefits of ICT can be harnessed for their mutual objectives.

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

I would like to recall that the Africa-India Forum Summit is intended to consider the modalities to strengthen the cooperation ties between the two partners in the areas of Economic; Political; Science, Technology, Research and Development; Social Development and Capacity Building; Tourism; Infrastructure, Energy and Environment and Media and Communication.

The Africa – India Forum Summit aims also at adopting harmonized and comprehensive framework to reinforce the regional cooperation in a wide range of fields as support to the already existing bilateral cooperation between African countries and India.

The Forum would be an opportunity to publicise Africa India partnership. It will come up with concrete proposals and outcomes so as to push forward the existing cooperation between the two partners. The Summit is expected to adopt a Joint Declaration of the Africa – India Partnership that would contain the political commitments of the two sides.

The role of the media in reporting on the progress and successful implementation of the decisions of the Africa-India Forum Summit, emanating from the Framework Cooperation and its Action Plan will bring a qualitative change into the existing relationship between Africa and India.

I hope that this Symposium on India-Africa Media Partnership will in deed build the bridge in strengthening the cooperation ties between Africa and India and bring to light the efforts done by both parties, to better the living conditions of their populations.

**While wishing you a fruitful deliberation,**

**I thank You.**