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OPENING REMARKS BY H.E. Dr. NKOSAZANA DLAMINI  
ZUMA, CHAIRPERSON OF THE COMMISSION OF THE  
AFRICAN UNION ON THE OCCASION OF 8TH AUC-EC  
COLLEGE-TO-COLLEGE MEETING

**Thursday, 7 April 2016**  
**Addis Ababa, Ethiopia**

**H.E EU High Representative and Vice President of the EC,  
Excellencies European Commissioners**

**H.E. Deputy Chairperson of African Union Commission and  
Excellencies AU Commissioners**

**Officials from the two Commissioners**

**Distinguished Participants**

**Ladies and Gentlemen**

On behalf of the AU Commission, a warm welcome to Vice President Mogherini and your delegation from the European Commission. I recognise that H.E Jean-Claude Juncker, the President of The European Commission (EC) could not participate in this meeting due to the common challenges of our time, which of course was the tragic and condemnable attacks at Brussels' Zaventem airport and at the Maelbeek metro station in the morning rush hour of Tuesday, 22 March 2016. That incident is yet another reminder that Africa and Europe must work together to address the root causes of terrorism.

The African Union today is commemorating the 22<sup>nd</sup> anniversary of the Rwanda Genocide, taking place in the Year of Human Rights, with a special focus on women. The efforts of the continent, to build caring and inclusive societies, to promote a culture of human rights, to discourage impunity and to work for a peaceful and prosperous Africa, is part of our commitment to the principle of non-indifference and to ensure that we silence the guns for lasting peace and security for all.

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## **Distinguished Participants &**

### **Co-Chair**

After the Valletta Summit on migration and the Paris climate conference (COP21) in 2015, this 8<sup>th</sup> College-to-College meeting provides yet another opportunity for the two Commissions to take stock and reflect on the Africa – EU partnership.

We meet at a time of important developments in our neighbouring continents, with critical issues such as the economic situation, migration, security, youth unemployment and the persistence of inequality, including gender inequality impacting on both our societies.

The Africa-EU partnership has resulted in cooperation in a number of practical areas, such as science and technology, the Pan African University, peace and security, renewable energy and conservation, to name a few. We must continue to cooperate and strengthen these areas, to the mutual benefits of the peoples of our respective continents.

After the challenges of the financial crisis, Europe is in the process of redefining its relationship with the world through its Global Strategy on Security and Foreign Policy (EUSG). At the same time, Africa is working on fast-tracking the implementation of Agenda 2063 to transform the continent and break the cycle of poverty, dependence and underdevelopment. And we are building partnerships to advance Agenda 2063.

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The demographic trends in the two continents are moving in opposite directions: Africa with a growing and young population, and Europe with an ageing population. As neighbouring continents, this trend can either be seen as a threat to Europe and increased migration; or as an opportunity. So, it is up to us to decide what we take. But my take would be that let us see this as an opportunity and see how it can work for both continents.

Africans from across the continent and all walks of life agree that the surest, and in fact, only route to changing the lives of its people for the better and transform this continent, is if we diversify our economies.

To achieve this, we must continue to skill our young people, add value to our raw materials, including agro-processing, so that we industrialise, develop an African private sector and provide the much needed jobs and business opportunities for African young men and women.

This includes fast tracking the implementation of the African Mining Vision, and paying greater attention to our blue and green economies. Otherwise, we shall forever be the helpless victims of boom-bust commodity cycles, which we have no control over.

The Paris Climate change summit has resulted in important agreements. We must, however, do more to reduce emissions faster, and help developing

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countries and continents through technology transfers and mitigating the impact of climate change.

Actually, Africa as a latecomer to industrialisation has an opportunity to industrialise through the green economy and through renewables, if we work together in terms of transfer of technology; this is possible.

The African efforts and initiatives, such as climate smart agriculture, the Great Green Wall of the Sahara, the African Risk Capacity agency, our commitments around reforestation, renewable energy and water management, are our contribution not only to our own well-being, but to that of our whole planet and to future generations.

In addition, we have just concluded the annual regional coordination mechanism consultations with the UN, where we agreed that for Africa the Sustainable Development Goals will be implemented through Agenda 2063, and we are working together on common indicators and monitoring.

### **Excellencies and Co-Chair,**

It is a matter of public record, that in our view, the trade relationship between Europe and Africa, expressed through the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs), and how Europe relates to Africa on the issue of raw materials has to change. Because, I don't think in the past it has advanced integration and industrialisation. So, in order to diversify our economies, we need to add value and beneficiate our raw materials. We cannot, and will not therefore, continue to have binding agreements that are in

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contradiction to the way we think we should work to diversify our economies, to improve job creation, and to develop Africa.

This is a critical conversation that we should continue to have, so that we can bridge this gap and move towards a more of a win-win situation, which is possible.

As a continent, we are concentrating all energies and hard at work on the Agenda 2063 priorities: investing in our people, men and women, girls and boys especially in the areas of science, technology, mathematics and engineering; in developing manufacturing and agro-processing; in building infrastructure (transport, water, sanitation, energy, ICT); in domestic resource mobilisation and stemming illicit financial flows; which I think the EU can assist us a lot in doing, in stemming these illicit financial flows, and assist us to return those finances that have been illicitly taken out of our continent; silencing the guns and promoting human rights, democratic and developmental governance, and the rights of youth and women.

African economies are currently grappling with the impact of the commodity price collapse, and of droughts and floods in a number of regions. We have been informed that the El Niño that was bringing droughts will turn into El Niña, which will bring floods. So, we are going to be faced with this situation for a while.

Despite this, our economies last year grew at over 3%, and we are still home to over half of the world's twenty fastest growing economies. Intra-

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Africa trade and investment is growing, though slowly, but steadily, and public expenditure on infrastructure over the last few years has grown faster than general expenditure.

This is why through Agenda 2063, we continue to emphasize integration, including work of the regional energy pools, the just-started Continental Free Trade Area negotiations, the work of the African Governance and Peace architectures, our regional transport corridors and the Pan African High Speed rail initiatives, a single African aviation market, building an environment conducive to the African private sector and on free movement of people on the continent.

Agenda 2063 being a long term projection and framework allows us to escape our immediate constraints, and to think more positively about what we can do for the future.

## **Co-Chairs**

## **Distinguished Participants**

The year 2016 is a milestone in the continental agenda to entrench women's rights as human rights as this is the "*African Year of Human Rights with a Particular Focus on the Rights of Women*".

Gender equality and women's empowerment are not only fundamental human rights, but are essential ingredients for sustainable development,

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peace and prosperity. They are at the centre of Agenda 2063 and to Africa meeting its obligations under the SDGs.

We therefore work on a number of initiatives to ensure that African girls and women are empowered, in the political, social, cultural and economic spheres alike. We hope that we can continue to work with the EU on all these issues.

The full realisation of the objectives of Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals are firmly grounded on the effective participation of women and girls, and of young people across all layers of society.

### **Distinguished Participants**

The issues mentioned above are of critical importance to us, and should inform our partnership as we prepare for the 2017 Africa-EU Summit.

Let me re-affirm, once again, that the AU Commission is committed to directing energies towards achieving sustainable results in all key priority areas and in all the areas that we cooperate in.

As I conclude, let me once again extend my warm welcome to our colleagues from the European Commission. We look forward to interacting with you in the course of the day; that is why we have set aside a whole day, so that we can really discuss in a friendly atmosphere. I am quite confident that our deliberations will develop greater understanding and joint action for the common good of our respective peoples.

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I thank you.

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