

Check against Delivery

Closing Remarks

By

H.E. Mr. Hailemariam Dessalegn

**Prime Minister of the Federal Democratic Republic of
Ethiopia and Chairperson of the African Union**

At

**The 21th ordinary session of the Assembly of Heads of
State and Government of the African Union**

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Addis Ababa

Excellencies Heads of State and Government,

Excellency Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, Chairperson of the African Union Commission,

Distinguished Heads of Delegation,

Invited Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to express my sincere thanks to all of you for having made the 21th ordinary session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union, which was held at the backdrop of the Golden Jubilee celebration of the OAU/AU a resounding success. This is indeed an important year for Africa and the reflection that we have had in connection with the celebration no doubt has given added impetus to our resolve to make the coming decades affirm further the rise of Africa and make it irreversible.

Over the last five decades, Africa has covered significant ground. The political independence of Africa — and the final dismantlement of Apartheid - was not achieved without sacrifice, bitter struggle, and blood. That was also the main mission of the Organization of African Unity, which it had accomplished with great

success in the true spirit of Pan-Africanism. For this and many more reasons, we continue to pay special tribute to the generations of Pan-Africanists and the Founders of the OAU who strived to promote unity, solidarity, cohesion and cooperation among the peoples of Africa and African States.

As we reflected on our past achievements and challenges, we have resolved to rededicate ourselves to be guided by the same ideals of Pan-Africanism—African solidarity and unity-in-diversity. It is again with the spirit of African Renaissance that we have strongly recommitted ourselves to consolidate our gains in the maintenance of peace, stability, good governance, popular participation and economic development in our continent. Therefore, I am glad to say that we tackled the items on our agenda in this spirit of revival and rejuvenation.

The Declaration on the 50th Anniversary of the OAU/AU that we adopted and signed during our session is indeed testament to our resolve to make the 21st century an African century. I also wish to note the preparation of Vision 2063 on which the Executive Council has decided to have a Ministerial Retreat. I am pleased

Ethiopia's offer to host the Retreat has been accepted by the Council.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We started our work by adopting the Strategic Plan of the African Union Commission for the years 2014-2017. In my view, this is an important document, which is designed to sustain Africa's growth trajectory in the short and medium term with a view to achieving our vision of an integrated, prosperous, people-centered and peaceful continent. Therefore, I call upon the African Union Commission, other organs of the African Union, Regional Economic Communities (RECs), member States and all other stakeholders to do their part in the implementation of the Strategic Plan.

We have also considered the report of the High Level Panel on Alternative Sources of Funding the African Union. This issue has been on the Agenda of the Assembly for quite some time and we have thoroughly deliberated on the best way to move forward. Accordingly, we have agreed to adopt the report of the High Level Panel in principle and refer the matter to the Ministers of Finance

and Economic Development to examine it in greater detail and report back to our next ordinary session with concrete recommendations. I trust we have taken note of the appeal by the Chair of the Panel, Former President Obasanjo, who reminded us with passion how much this work should be speeded up. He is absolutely right in saying that if we want to have full ownership of our Pan-Africanist strategies, then we should be prepared to make sacrifices – in this case small ones indeed.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

During our session, we have also considered the report of the Peace and Security Council on its activities as well as on the state of peace and security in our continent. Over the last decade, we have managed to overcome and manage many conflicts that ravaged our continent and succeeded to transform once conflict ridden nations to an emerging success stories.

African leadership has also continued to be a key factor in reconciling complex peace and security challenges in the continent. The African Union Peace and Security Architecture with its

continental Early Warning System, the Panel of the Wise and the African Stand by Force, with the Peace and Security Council at the helm, has fundamentally overhauled Africa's capacity to contribute to peace and stability in the continent. As we celebrate the Fiftieth Anniversary of our organization, these efforts have started to show encouraging results.

In this regard, it is reassuring to note the progress made in bringing peace and stability in Somalia. The Assembly deliberated on how our Union, in coordination with IGAD and the UN, could assist in consolidating the gains that have been made recently both in the political and security fronts and assist our Somali brothers and sisters in rebuilding their nation.

In Sudan and South Sudan, despite some hiccups, the two sisterly countries have also made important progress in implementing the African Union Roadmap and United Nations Security Council resolution 2046 (2012) by accepting to implement their previous agreements. We will continue to assist both in achieving the objective of creating two viable states living side by side in peace and harmony.

In Mali, African initiative with the support of partners—such as France— helped the country to reverse the potentially dangerous trend. But, there remains a lot to be done to address the threat of terrorism and restore stability in that country. Here, I wish to emphasize the need for greater cooperation and coordination between ECOWAS, AU, UN and other partners.

The situation in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo has also improved since our last summit. Here again, the regional countries came together to sign the Framework Agreement for Peace, Security and Cooperation. It is our hope that this agreement will faithfully be implemented with the spirit of African brotherhood and solidarity. In this regard, I wish to note that the first meeting of the Joint Oversight Mechanism was held on the sidelines of our Summit.

The issue of unconstitutional changes of government has continued to be a challenge for our continent. The situation in Madagascar and the recent developments in Central African Republic, Guinea Bissau and Niger are reflections of this worrying trend. While noting the importance of looking for political solutions

to these problems, I have no doubt that non-acceptance of unconstitutional changes of government will remain our firm position as reflected in the Lome Declaration and the Constitutive Act.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The formulation of the Post-2015 development agenda is bound to be an important milestone in the history of international development cooperation. The efforts made by the international community over the last decade in implementing the MDGs have strengthened global partnership to attain common objectives in the social area, among others, in addressing the challenges of poverty. Though many countries in Africa have made progress in achieving some of the targets of the MDGs, much still remains to be done. The formulation of new international development goals should thus be based on a thorough assessment of the MDGs, taking stock of achievements and gaps. This is vital because for Africa, implementation of MDGs is still an unfinished business.

As we participate in the global efforts to chart the post-2015 development agenda, we should ensure that the progress achieved thus far is sustained and that Africa's development priorities beyond 2015 are fully taken into account. I believe we should draw lessons from our successful experience at Climate Change negotiations and speak with one voice in advocating for the common African position on the post-2015 development agenda. In this regard, we have constituted a group of African Heads of State and Government, under the leadership of H.E. Madam Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, President of the Republic of Liberia, who will steer the effort in canvassing support for Africa's development priorities in the context of the post-2015 development agenda.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

During our session, we also received reports from H.E. Mr. Macky Sall, President of the Republic of Senegal and Chairperson of the NEPAD Heads of State and Government Orientation Committee (HSGOC) on the work of the committee; from H.E. Mr. Ernest Bai Koroma, President of the Republic of Sierra Leone on the work of

the Committee of Ten on the UN Reforms as well as a briefing from H.E. President Jacob Zuma on the Outcomes of the BRICS Leaders Africa Dialogue Forum held in Durban, South Africa. All these reports will certainly help us chart our way, with the same spirit of African Renaissance, to build our capacity and attain our legitimate aspiration for proper representation of Africa in the global governance structure.

All our best intentions would, however, amount to nothing if we failed to build the capacity of our Union as well as that of member States to realize our objectives. There is also no gainsaying that ensuring coordination and harmonization of our efforts is critical in achieving our dreams.

Africa's current trend is indeed positive and it is incumbent upon us to ensure this is maintained and our objectives are realized much sooner. I wish to conclude my remarks by referring to what my late Prime Minister H.E. Mr. Meles Zenawi, said about Africa's recent trajectory and I quote:

“Africa is rising indeed. The African Renaissance has begun and it is within our means to create a new pole of global

growth in Africa, to fully stabilize our continent and to make sure that it takes its rightful place in the global scheme of things.”

It is my fervent hope that this new spirit of renewal and rejuvenation will give us the energy and enthusiasm to mobilize all sections of our society towards the realization of the African Renaissance.

Finally, I wish to conclude my remarks by expressing my profound appreciation to all those who have contributed their share to the success of our meeting. My special thanks goes to the leadership and staff members of the Commission including interpreters, protocol, conference and security officers as well as other support staff members for their diligence and hard work in facilitating our work.

I wish you all a safe journey back home.

I thank you