

AFRICAN UNION

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Welcome remarks of the AU Commission Chairperson, HE
Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma to 27th Ordinary Session of the
Permanent Representatives Committee

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21 January 2014

Addis Ababa

For the PRC, this is a busy time of the year, a time to reflect on the past year, while keeping a watchful eye for the opportunities and challenges for the year ahead. Indeed, an important time, as looking back enables us to learn from our achievements and mistakes, and prepare ourselves to bring change and improvement to the coming year.

Madam Chairperson,

During the preparatory work of the PRC, you considered the 2013 Annual report of the Commission, as an overview of activities for the year, and a snapshot of the progress made and challenges facing the Union and our continent.

2013 was an exciting year, as we commemorated the Golden Jubilee of the founding of the OAU/AU. The Golden Jubilee celebration highlighted the progress of the past Fifty years and Africa's aspirations for its Renaissance and its commitment to

take its own destiny into its own hands.

Moreover, the 50th Anniversary Solemn Declaration adopted in May, which the PRC helped steer, reaffirmed the resolve of our heads of state and government. The resolve: to rid our continent of poverty, diseases, dependence and wars, and to work together, in unity and solidarity, for an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa.

Our leaders reaffirmed their resolve to work diligently to ensure Africa's reliance on her own people and resources, and to nurture the aspirations of the People – young and old, women and men – to be the agents of their destiny.

Madam Chairperson,

As you are aware, this past year the PRC and the Commission, worked together to redefine Africa's relationship with

the world. At the various high-level meetings, such as the Africa-South America Summit, TICAD V, and the Africa-Arab Summit, we have made our vision for quality partnership clear to our partners. Moreover, we made important multi-lateral negotiations, including the Bali round of Trade negotiations and the Conference on the Parties on Climate Change in Warsaw.

I, express my appreciation to the PRC and its Sub-Committee on Multilateral Affairs and other Partnerships, for working with the Commission to accomplish progresses thus far. It is my sincere belief, that by working together we will achieve our fundamental goal of promoting the interests of the Union, and transforming our continent.

Distinguished Members of the PRC,

Our focus in 2013 was on external affairs, asserting and conveying our priorities to our stakeholders, and the realignment

of our partnerships. Africa's transformation will require working with partners around the world to strengthen individual and institutional capacities.

In 2014, we will focus on the Commission's internal affairs: from effective performance by the Commission, to better support and service to our policy organs, including the PRC and Member states.

In particular, we shall build a strong institution, an institution that retains Africa's best minds and skilled professionals. In order to bring much needed and lasting change, we will look at the challenges the Commission faces and address them accordingly. We will aspire to promote excellence and service. In doing so, we may have to make difficult decisions.

As usual, we will rely on the support of the PRC to strengthen the Commission and transform it into an effective and

premier continental institution. Our institutions must strive towards excellence in all activities, taking forward the Pan African goals of our Union and in service of the African people.

Distinguished Members of the PRC,

As we begin the New Year, there are many positive developments in the priority areas of our Strategic Plan, which are fundamental to our continental transformation. These developments are included in the 2013 Annual Report of the Commission that we discussed yesterday, and all reports that will be presented at the Summit. It also forms an integral part of the Agenda 2063 framework document.

These developmental priorities will continue to guide our work during 2014, and the Commission will spare no effort to ensure that we do our part, working with the RECs and Member States to:

- Empower our people, especially women and youth; promoting investing in health, education, public services, science, research and innovation.
- Promote Peace and security, good governance, democracy and human rights as foundations for development and for secure societies.
- Implement our policy frameworks to foster sustainable development, increase agricultural production, food and nutrition security, grow agro-businesses and intra-Africa trade, develop our Blue and Green economies and sound environmental and natural resource management.
- Speed up infrastructure development to connect the continent, and foster environments for inclusive economic development, industrialization, beneficiation of our mineral resources, private sector development and intra-Africa trade.

- Work with other continental institutions and Member states to implement strategies for domestic and other resource mobilization, to enable Africa to finance its development.
- Build a People's Union that communicates with and engages Members States, civil society, the African citizenry, the private sector, the Diaspora and all stakeholders in defining and implementing the African agenda.
- Continuous improvement of the effectiveness of the Commission and strengthened relations with RECs, AU Organs, ECA, ADB and other partners.

During 2014, the Commission's work in all these areas will be guided by the theme of our Union, the Year of Agriculture and Food Security. The discussions around Agenda 2063 will continue to inform our common positions on the global post-2015 development agenda and other global negotiations.

As the PRC and Commission, we must continue to work together tirelessly to ensure the implementation of our Union decisions and policy frameworks and strategies.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Our hearts are heavy due to the events in Central African Republic and Southern Sudan. The Peace and Security Council, IGAD and the AU Commission are working tirelessly to forge a peaceful solution to the conflicts. Our collective efforts are not only to end the bloodshed, but also to address the recurring and root causes of these conflicts, in order to build lasting peace and stability.

At the same time, the progress made in Mali, Somalia and Madagascar should make us more resolute than ever to fulfill the pledge of our 50th Anniversary Solemn Declaration not to

bequeath to future generations of Africans the legacy of wars and conflicts, and to silence the guns by 2020.

Madam Chairperson,

Distinguished Members of the PRC,

Members of the Commission and Dear Colleagues,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me again wish you and yours a happy, healthy and prosperous 2014, as well as a successful, peaceful and productive year in the service of our continent.

Ameseginalehu

Asante

Merci

Shoukran

Thank you!

Obrigado