

Check against Delivery

Remarks

By

H.E. Ambassador Kongit Sinegiorgis

**Permanent Representative of Ethiopia to the
African Union and UNECA and Chairperson of the
Permanent Representatives Committee (PRC)**

At

**The 27th ordinary session of the Permanent
Representatives Committee of the African Union**

21 January 2014

Addis Ababa

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

Excellency Mr. Erastus Mwencha, Deputy Chairperson of the Commission,

Excellencies Permanent Representatives and Commissioners,

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As always, let me start by welcoming those who have joined us from the capitals to the 27th ordinary session of the Permanent Representative's Committee of the African Union. We have covered a lot of ground during our marathon meeting last week but a lot still remains to be done in the coming two days to finalize our preparations for the upcoming ordinary sessions of the Executive Council and the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union. I hope with your usual cooperation, we will be able to finalize our work as expeditiously as possible.

Excellencies and Colleagues,

As we begin our session by reflecting on the state of our Union based on the annual report of the Commission for the year 2013, we are satisfied with the progress made in the advancement of the

peace, integration and development agenda of our continent as clearly reflected in the report of the Commission. The celebration of the Golden Jubilee of the OAU/AU, the development of our own narrative to tell the African story from our perspective and raise the profile of our Union, the adoption of the strategic plan of the Commission for the years 2014-2017, the crafting of an AU wide strategic framework for the next 50 years through a wide consultative process, the strengthening of Africa's partnership with the rest of the world, the implementation of the key priorities and programmes of the African Union as well as the promotion of peace and security and democratic governance are indeed some of the major activities carried out last year.

Nevertheless, we are all cognizant of the challenges we still face in a number of areas. Particularly, we have a long way to go in terms of implementing the myriad of decisions adopted by the policy organs of our Union. Hence, there is a critical need to enhance our performance so as to achieve the fundamental objectives of our Union. In this regard, I am pleased to note the commitment of H.E. Chairperson Zuma and her team to accelerate the institutional

effectiveness of the Commission and take decisive measures to address this matter as a key priority in 2014.

Most importantly, I believe we should thoroughly examine some of the challenges that both member States and the Commission are facing with a view to finding appropriate remedies to help us improve the implementation capacity of our organization. I am particularly of the view that we should seriously think about reducing the number of decisions adopted by the Policy Organs so as to give adequate time for implementation. Otherwise, adopting so many decisions and not getting them implemented will have no meaning to our people and render our organization weak and ineffective.

We should also deliberate on ways and means of enhancing the institutional capacity of our Commission. How can we ensure professionalism and discipline in the Commission? How can we reduce wastage of human, financial and material resources and ensure efficiency and effectiveness? How can we promote better coordination between and among the various departments within the Commission?

I wish to note the commitment made by the Commission under the leadership of H.E. Dr. Zuma “to lead by example, in ensuring that ... the organizational values and culture, profile and role of the AUC is improved and enhanced”. Therefore, I believe the PRC should assist the Chairperson and her team as they strive to find answers to all the issues I referred above as a key priority this year.

Excellencies and Colleagues,

On the other hand, I believe the PRC should also reflect on its own shortcomings and exert more efforts to improve its working methods. We have, of course, made notable progress this year in terms of our time management. But we need to take the work of our sub-committees seriously. We have often faced problem of quorum in conducting the meetings of the Sub-Committees. More often than not, we find it difficult to get the report of sub-committees on time for our deliberations.

We all know that the relation between the PRC and the Commission has been fraught with acrimony and mistrust. We need

to enhance trust between these two important organs of our Union and improve their working relations. This is indeed very critical in order for us to fully rededicate our concerted efforts towards the implementation of decisions adopted by the policy organs and achieve the desired outcomes.

I hope all these issues will be seriously addressed during the retreat between the PRC and the AUC. I am sure we all agree that we cannot afford to postpone the retreat anymore. After the end of this Summit, we should find the time to hold the retreat as a matter of priority and brainstorm on all the issues that preoccupy each and every one of us with a view to finding amicable solutions and strengthening the work of our organization.

Excellencies and Colleagues,

Finally, I hope we will embark on the New Year with a spirit of cooperation and solidarity to advance the objectives of our Union and fulfill the aspirations of our people. With those few remarks, I wish all of us a fruitful deliberation. I count on your usual cooperation in steering our meeting to a successful conclusion.

I thank you