

**Remarks**

**By**

**H.E. Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus**

**Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Federal Democratic  
Republic of Ethiopia and Chairperson of the Executive  
Council of the African Union**

**At**

**The First Ministerial Retreat of the African Union**

**24 January 2014**

**Bahir Dar**

***Excellencies Ministers,***

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

***Excellency Dr. Carlos Lopes, Under Secretary-General and Executive Secretary of UNECA,***

***Excellency Dr. Donald Kaberuka, President of the African Development Bank,***

***Excellency Mr. Kandeh Yumkella, Chairperson of UN- Energy,***

***Invited Guests,***

***Ladies and Gentlemen,***

It is indeed a great pleasure to warmly welcome you all to Bahir Dar - a city located on the southern shore of Lake Tana which is the largest lake in Ethiopia and the source of the Blue Nile. I would like to thank you for attending this Retreat, which demonstrates your commitment to the advancement of the objectives of our continental organization. Let me also take this opportunity to express my sincere appreciation to the Amhara National Regional State and the city of Bahir Dar for all their support and cooperation in the organization of this Retreat.

***Colleagues,***

The reason why we are having this Retreat in Bahir Dar is to escape from the formalities of Addis Ababa and hold a frank exchange of views in a relaxed atmosphere without any attribution. At the same time, we also wanted you, brothers and sisters, to have the opportunity to travel outside of Addis Ababa and witness the progress that is happening in other part of Ethiopia.

Bahir Dar is, of course, one of the cities in Ethiopia that are showing rapid transformation in recent years. The city is indeed a microcosm of the dramatic change that is taking place in our country. With its various attractions including Lake Tana and the Blue Nile, Bahir Dar is also a major tourist destination and I hope you will find time to explore what this beautiful city has to offer. On our part, I would like to assure you that we will do everything possible to make your brief stay in Bahir Dar as much productive and enjoyable as possible.

***Colleagues,***

We are gathered here today to map out our vision for the next fifty years and set our milestones to get there. This is part of our collective reflection as we continue to mark the Golden Jubilee

celebration of the OAU/AU in this year of Pan-Africanism and African Renaissance. As we have clearly set out in our objectives, this is the time to do a serious soul searching -not so much to dwell on the past but to learn from it and chart a better future.

In this context, the African Union Commission, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa and the African Development Bank have developed a framework document, through a wide consultative process, outlining "**Agenda 2063: A shared Strategic Framework for Inclusive Growth and Sustainable Development**". We will, therefore, brainstorm on this framework document with a view to further enriching it before its final adoption at the 23<sup>rd</sup> ordinary session of the Assembly in June/July 2014.

**Colleagues,**

As we embark on our collective reflection, I believe we need to ask ourselves where we want Africa to be over the next fifty years. What kind of Africa do we want to bequeath to the next generation? What should we do to realize the African Renaissance? These have indeed been major preoccupations for politicians and academicians alike for quite some time. Obviously, we cannot predict the future

but we can anticipate some of the mega trends in the coming years and decades.

Our Founding fathers, in their wisdom and foresight, laid out a vision for Africa in 1963 when they signed the Charter establishing the Organization of African Unity - a vision for the total liberation of the continent from all forms of subjugation as well as the promotion of unity and solidarity among African States to achieve a better life for the peoples of Africa.

Today, it is gratifying to note that Africa has been liberated with the exception of some territories but we could say much progress has been made to ensure the freedom and dignity of our peoples. However, achieving the economic emancipation of Africa remains a daunting challenge. Various policies and strategies have been tried and tested in the past but we all know that they did not succeed in taking us to the Promised Land. Therefore, what lesson could we draw from our past experiences as well as the success of other developing countries as we strive to change the plight of our people and ultimately realize the African Renaissance. This is the issue that we need to address as we look forward into Africa's future.

Of course, the progress achieved over the last decade in promoting peace and stability as well as ensuring rapid economic growth has rekindled a new sense of hope and optimism that Africa's renewal and rejuvenation is beginning to happen. However, there is need to sustain the momentum by consolidating peace and stability in our continent and accelerating rapid economic growth with a view to bringing about the desired structural transformation. It is also very critical, as recent developments have made it evident, for us to acknowledge the deficit we continue to face in governance and democratization whose solution, is indispensable for the realization of our aspiration.

### ***Colleagues,***

If we want to claim the 21<sup>st</sup> century as ours and realize the African Renaissance, there is a need for a paradigm shift in our political and socio-economic governance and development. Leadership is no doubt very critical - a capable leadership which is free from rent seeking behavior, fully committed to Africa's transformation agenda and tirelessly works to break the vicious cycle of poverty and bring about sustainable development and prosperity for his/her people.

But leadership alone is not sufficient; all sections of the African society should embrace the vision and mobilize themselves to contribute their share towards its realization. There is, therefore, a need to have a critical mass of people with a developmental mindset so as to set the stage for take-off. Here is where institutions of democratic governance and their strengthening are so critical. Institutions built on rules of law are what will ensure people are mobilized for achieving common goals and for realizing long-term agendas such as Agenda 2063, which call for continuity that can only be ensured by robust institutions. Over and above that, we need to have a favorable global environment to achieve our vision and we should properly analyze our challenges and threats as we strive to meet our goals.

### ***Colleagues,***

It is within this broader framework that we will examine Agenda 2063 during this Retreat. We have selected five sub-themes to guide our discussion on this issue of paramount significance to the future of our continent. There will be lead speakers who are intimately involved in the crafting of Agenda 2063 and/or are knowledgeable on the issues. They will help us in putting the issues

in perspective for our discussion and I look forward to your active participation.

Finally, I hope this Ministerial Retreat will achieve its objective in stimulating debate on Agenda 2063 and I am confident that your valuable contribution will further enrich the framework document. I conclude my brief remarks by wishing you a pleasant stay in Bahir Dar.

I thank you