



**OPENING REMARKS FOR MINISTER MAITE NKOANA-
MASHABANE**

27th ORDINARY SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

SANDTON INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION CENTRE

11 JUNE 2015

- Your Excellency, Chairperson of the Executive Council, Minister Simbarashe Mumbengegwi of the Republic of Zimbabwe;
- Your Excellency, Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Dr Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma;
- Your Excellences, Heads of Delegation;
- Your Excellences, Distinguished Members of the Diplomatic Corps;
- Distinguished Guests

Let me reiterate my warm welcome to you all to South Africa. Following our robust engagement in the last two days at our retreat, I know that we are ready and determined to use the Executive Council effectively to prepare for the necessary decisions by our leaders. If our leaders had sat in on the robust discussions we had at the retreat on the first 10 year implementation plan of Agenda 2063, I am sure they would have shared the sense of urgency and commitment which I took from the meeting regarding the need to implement, to implement, to implement all the critical decisions necessary to make the lives of our people, in particular women, better as embodied in Agenda 2063. We must thank the Chair of the Commission for the work that they have done on Agenda 2063.

With seven of the fastest growing economies in the world being in Africa and the continent being the repository of all the variety of resources required in minerals for either sustained development or sustained recovery, the time has never been opportune for Africa to achieve the things it wants. Furthermore, with our youth dividend the continent is uniquely advantaged. Therefore, never has the effectiveness of the AU, and the symbiosis between its organs and structures, been more critical. Whether Africa seizes the moment or not, is dependent on how we as the Executive Council, which is a critical layer of the decision making processes of the African Union, work. Therefore, how we process the work deposited to us by the PRC and take it forward to our Heads of State and Government, is important. Through us they must resolve not only issues of the implementation of Agenda 2063 but also the necessary resources to fund it, as well as matters pertinent to peace and security. This is just lifting a few of the wide range of areas that our leaders are supposed to deliberate on in a short space of time.

Following our interaction at the retreat, I know we are all inspired and ready to work to make it easy for our leaders to conclude their work on a heavy agenda covering a wide range of issues.

With these words I wish you a pleasant stay in South Africa.

Thank You.