



STATEMENT BY

**H.E. DR. AISHA L. ABDULLAHI
COMMISSIONER FOR POLITICAL AFFAIRS
AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION**

DELIVERED ON HER BEHALF BY

**AMB. SALAH S. HAMMAD
SENIOR HUMAN RIGHTS EXPERT
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL AFFAIRS
AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION**

AT THE

**MODEL AFRICAN UNION BAYREUTH CONFERENCE
UNDER THE THEME:
“TOWARDS A PEACEFUL PROSPEROUS AND MORE INTEGRATED AFRICA”**

**BAYREUTH, GERMANY
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Your Excellency, Prof. Dr. Dymitr Ibrismow, Dean of the Bayreuth International Graduate School of African Studies

Excellencies, Faculty Members of Bayreuth University

Excellencies, Ambassadors and Members of the Diplomatic Corp

Distinguished Students of Bayreuth University

Distinguished Representatives from Development Organizations

Distinguished Representatives of Civil Society Organisations

Invited Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The convening of this Model African Union under the Theme: **“Towards a Peaceful Prosperous and More Integrated Africa”** is as timely as it is necessary and I cannot but express, on behalf of H.E. Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission and all of its members, our immense delight as I warmly welcome you to this Opening Session and to what we consider, a momentous milestone in the history of our continental organisation. This first ever Model African Union devoted to Shared Values, comes at a fitting moment in the evolution of the desire and endeavour for unity and integration. Our enthusiasm is further heightened as the debate at this Conference would be instrumental in shaping the African path into the future.

We are gathered here because of a conviction that the African Union, as a shared vision and commitment, can contribute to making Africa a region that we can all be proud of. The decision to reflect on a peaceful, prosperous and more integrated Africa and the challenges and obstacles for accelerating integration through our commonalities and common values, will for long endure as that defining moment when the African leadership unequivocally challenged the African people not to be judged by the levels of poverty and conflicts on the Continent but by their collective and individual commitment

to the values of equality, equity, solidarity, communalism and reconciliation, towards development and progress.

I would like to briefly put the current state of play of regional integration in Africa in a historical context. It is a fact that since the early days of independence of African States our leaders have not only been conscious, but alive to the fact that the fragmentation of nation States that was bequeathed by the colonization of Africa by different imperial powers would make sustainable economic development extremely difficult. Hence, the debate in the early 1960s on the strategy for integrating African economies which had two schools of thought. One school of thought was for the creation of a United States of Africa through a political and economic federation that would enable the pooling of resources and creation of a single market. The other school of thought favoured a gradual approach to economic integration on the basis of the establishment of sub regional economic communities. I need not go into the merits and demerits of the debate, suffice that the gradualist school for integrating the fragmented markets in Africa won the day. Since 1980 through the Lagos Plan of Action and the Final Act of the Lagos Plan of Action establishing the Regional Economic Communities and later on the Abuja Treaty of 1992 African countries under the auspices of the OAU and AU respectively have used sub regional economic communities as vehicles for the realization of continental socio economic integration.

It is also just over fifty years since the United Nations adopted, in December 1959, Resolution 1514 which reaffirmed that ‘all people have the right to self-determination’ and by virtue of which they could ‘freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development’. At this equally significant moment of just under thirty years since the adoption of the most historic African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights, the decision for this Conference is indeed a rallying call to all Africans that “our common destiny is our collective responsibility”. The world and our Continent have changed significantly since Resolution 1514 as symbolized by the number of our Member States celebrating their 50th anniversary of independence. The Union that has been established is maturing and is taking strides that show that it is responding to the vision of its founding fathers. It therefore makes good sense for this august body to reflect on Shared Values at this point in the continuing journey.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

If ever there was a time that we should cherish the ideals and the messages in the voices and words of the founding fathers that time is now. More than ever before, the Union that you have all established with foresight and vision is faced with the challenge of asserting its values and political interests in a context of diversity and difference. The need for political unity was echoed as far back as 1961 by the illustrious Dr. Kwame Nkrumah when he wrote that 'individually, the independent states of Africa, some of them potentially rich, others poor, can do little for their people. Together, by mutual help, they can achieve much'. He went further by stating that only a strong political union can bring about full and effective development of our natural resources for the benefit of our people. As was the case then, the challenge for the Union is one of upholding shared values and applying them in a context where there is appreciation of the sovereignty of Member States. Indeed, at the 2003 Summit, the then Chairperson of the Union, President Thabo Mbeki of the Republic of South Africa echoed the plea of Dr. Nkrumah for a political union by stating that '...we should not aspire to seek the lowest common denominator between us in our deliberations with each organ, but rather work towards an optimum balance between the Union's and Member States' interest'.

The commitment to a political union and an optimum balance has created within the African Union, a momentum towards developing and domesticating inspiring shared values. Certainly, by way of adopting collective instruments, Member States have demonstrated a desire for an integrated future through value harmonisation on the basis of agreed principles and practices. Hence, there has never been any doubt that adopted shared values serve to inspire action and are the operational mechanisms for achieving the desire for a better future for all. These instruments and the practical modalities for their implementation further serve to indicate that shared values are more than just philosophical dispositions and can and do serve to assert common approaches to challenges and provide the African voice on the global stage. With the adopted shared values, we have witnessed that the Union and its Member States have become

less reserved in their approach to identifying challenges, as they should, when problems are confronted. Member States have also reflected that they are cognizant and appreciative of local circumstances in the applicability of collectively established standards and, at the same time, have demonstrated a willingness to uphold our global commitments.

There is much in the experiences in the Continent that reflects very positive progress across the Continent. Consistent advancements are visible in many areas of democratisation, including the reduction in corruption and the building of systems for transparency and accountability in government. The participatory aspirations of African people are firmly implanted in the popular consciousness, and civil society, women and youth involvement has become an integral part of the African political landscape. More Africans now live under democratic rule compared to the situation in the early 1980s when only a few African countries were considered democratic. The number of elections held over the past decade in the Continent is tangible testimony to the advancements made. Although setbacks are experienced occasionally, the numbers of civil conflicts within states are much less, compared to the situation a decade ago. Despite the unique challenges that emanated as a result of Africa's colonial history and the reality that Democracy is always work in progress, our Continent has made significant comparable progress, relative to other regions.

As we reflect on our experiences within the Union over the past few years and decisions have been made on matters of shared values, especially as they relate to Governance and Democracy, we can conclude that 'ownership' and 'responsibility' remain the key driving elements for achieving the objectives articulated in the Constitutive Act of the Union. We know very well that often collective African values, as reflected in the instruments established, do not find full practical expressions at the level of Member States and indeed in the lives of the peoples of our Continent.

We also know well that it is not so much in the shared values that we experience divergences, but much more so in the manner in which they are applied and the extent to which shared values are African values. Although, we have adopted values and share many of these with the rest of the world, we also recognise that their application

requires that we also focus on upholding long established African values and in the principles of engagement, communality and solidarity that are deeply embedded in how we approach our problems and challenges. This difference in approach and methodology characterises not only the Union's engagement with conflict situations, but also defines the numerous initiatives that have been established, such as the African Peer Review Mechanism and the adopted African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance and the Convention on Internally Displaced Persons in Africa.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

In their 50th Anniversary Solemn Declaration, the Heads of State and Government of the African Union (AU), while acknowledging past successes and challenges, rededicated themselves to the continent's accelerated development and technological progress. They laid down a vision and eight ideals to serve as pillars for the continent in the foreseeable future, which Agenda 2063 will translate into concrete objectives, milestones, goals, targets and actions/measures. Agenda 2063 strives to enable Africa to remain focused and committed to the ideals envisaged in the context of a rapidly changing world.

Agenda 2063 is both a Vision and an Action Plan. It is a call for action to all segments of African society to work together to build a prosperous and united Africa based on shared values and a common destiny.

The African Union Agenda 2063 provides a pragmatic policy frame work for the fast tracking of regional and sub-regional economic integration in Africa. The role of the international community, particularly under the United Nations should be to mobilize international support to the programs of the African Union .This would mark a departure from past experience whereby the support by the international community to Africa's development was based on what the powerful multilateral financial and development institutions thought was good for Africa.

This critical Conference you are organizing today takes place in a context where the African Union has begun the implementation of the First Ten Year Implementation Plan

of Agenda 2063. Here it is important to note that Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have 90% convergence. Agenda 2063 is Africa specific, and will help to meet our global obligations under the SDGs.

In operational terms, the Agenda 2063 would be a rolling plan of 25 years, 10 years, 5 years and short term action plans. This new effort to envision Africa's long-term development trajectory is timely for several reasons, particularly the following (four **Ms**):

- **Mainstreaming gender:** across the board and ensure women and youth participation at all levels;
- **Misconception of rights:** is removed about the rights to development as a human rights;
- **Mentality of submissions:** is challenged and the African peoples are allowed to express their opinion and voice out their concerns;
- **Multiplicity of determination:** of development needs as part of the Action Plan of Agenda 2063.

As a result of these efforts, the identified gaps that exist between the governance vision that Africa has established and the many complex and difficult realities across our vast and diverse Continent will be filled, in particular, the following (four **Cs**):

- **Compliance:** a culture of respecting "Constitutionalism and Rule of Law" will be established and promoted;
- **Comprehensiveness:** the objective of "a Peaceful Prosperous and More Integrated Africa" will become a collective responsibility based a comprehensive approach to the rights to development.
- **Constructiveness:** Africa will stand strong to fight the challenge of corruption, which continues to confront the delivery of public services at the national level.
- **Contribution:** building a culture of democracy, openness and participation, will allow all African people to be part of the movement for change to make Africa a better place to live.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

As I close my remarks ,the narrative of “Africa Rising ” is true to the extent that we are witnessing a confident Africa that has come up with its own development paradigm and priorities as can be seen with AU countries through innovative financing infrastructure and energy projects from their own resources .

Finally, I would like to once again thank our host the Dean and Members of the Bayreuth International Graduate Schools of African Studies for their unwavering commitment to support the African Union Agenda. And I invite the Graduate School to sign a Memorandum of Understanding with the African Union to ensure a long lasting cooperation and collaboration between the two institutions and our people.

I thank you for your kind attention and look forward to a productive and results oriented Conference as we collectively seek for partnerships on a win-win basis.