

**Statement of H. E. Madam Fatima Haram Acyl, the
Commissioner for the Department of Trade and
Industry (African Union Commission)
at the Opening of the First Extraordinary Session of
the 3rd AU Conference of Ministers responsible for
Mineral Resources Development,
25 November, 2014
Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe**

**Mr. Chair,
Honourable Ministers,
Distinguished Guests,
Diplomatic corps
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**As a continent and in solidarity with the Government
and People of Zambia, I would like us to observe a
minute of silence in memory of the late President Mr.
Michael SATA, Affectionately known as “King Cobra”**

Thank you

- On behalf of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Dr. NKOSAZANA DLAMINI-ZUMA, I have the honour to welcome you all to the 1st

Extraordinary session of the Third AU Conference of Ministers Responsible for Mineral Resources Development.

- I wish to thank the Governments of Zambia and Zimbabwe for jointly hosting this Conference, I must say, quite successfully. Thank you all for your participation which demonstrates your commitment in discussing what I believe to be one of the most critical issues for the inclusive development of Africa.

- Thank you as well to Mbada Diamonds, the Chamber of Mines, and Mr TUKU for a splendid soirée last night.

- ***As I said to the Minister last night, I had a beautiful speech written, but I heard what he said and decided to change my own speech***

- His words last night at the Gala dinner indeed inspired me;

- His passion, his enthusiasm for the cause that brought us here today is contagious
- We heard the testimony from his staff last night, on how he inspires them every day;
- I can assure you that under the leadership of our Chairperson, Dr. DLAMINI-ZUMA, we at the African Union Commission, are equally inspired and dedicated to this cause.
- Let me recognize the team effort of our colleagues from Trade and Industry, Conferences Directorate, Protocol, Communications, Legal, and Finance. Without them, this meeting would not have materialized;
- I seize the opportunity to thank Member States and REC Secretariats for their valuable contribution and implementation;
- Finally, my thanks go to our partner organizations their continuous and deeply appreciated support.

Honourable Ministers, Ladies and Gentlemen,

- Some of us have grown up seeing a school here, a health centre there, built by transnational mining companies and felt grateful for that;
- But as we matured and understood that in fact, our resources were just being depleted without benefits to our people, it was, and it is, our duty to take the necessary action;
- As the Minister said last night, what we require is a paradigm shift.
- **We must ask ourselves, what is the legacy we are leaving for the next generation?**
- This is in line with AU Agenda 2063 and the Post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals, which, critically, includes skills and capacity development within Africa, especially for young people.
- We have also recognized the need to empower local communities, especially women and youth, through the use of beneficiation and local content policies.

Within this context, we must focus on resource mobilization, preventing illicit financial flows, and capturing revenues at the local level.

- The adoption of the African Mining Vision is indeed a major step forward in our commitment to change the situation, but in order to realize this vision, implementation at the national and regional level is more important.
- Our work this week builds on ongoing efforts across the continent to develop and manage our mineral resources in a responsible and inclusive manner, in order to achieve the structural transformation of Africa and the realization of Agenda 2063.
- At the Commission, We are also engaged in the development of an African Commodities Strategy that supports commodity-led industrialization of Africa.

- Better mineral resource management will also play a key role in supporting the African Union Commission's commitment to Silence Guns by 2020.

Honourable Ministers, Ladies and Gentlemen,

- We have reached a critical junction. Significant work has gone in to bringing us to this point.
- We have considered issues of institutionalization and sustainability for the AMDC.
- Progress is being made on the statute of the AMDC, but work must continue on the study on Centres of excellence and the financing mechanisms in order for the AMDC to become the institution that will serve the continent the way Member States want it to do;
- As we transition to STCs from 2015 going forward, we will become better able to develop and implement coherent policies across sectors

- We look forward to future opportunities to engage, through the AMV Day, the Mining Indaba Conference, Africa Industrialization Day, and other cross sector platforms.
- We stand ready as the African Union Commission to facilitate and support this process.

Honourable Ministers, Senior Officials, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

- I wish to commend our Senior Officials for the dedication demonstrated over the past three days to come up with the important documents they are presenting to us for consideration today to enable us move the Minerals agenda forward.
- I wish you fruitful and successful deliberations over the next two days.

Thank you.

