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**HIGH LEVEL MEETING ON GENDER ON THE POST 2015  
DEVELOPMENT AGENDA,  
ABIDJAN, COTE D'IVOIRE: 2-4 OCTOBER 2013**

**H. E. Dr. Anthony Mothae Maruping  
Commissioner for Economic Affairs  
African Union Commission**

**Excellency, Daniel Kablan Duncan, Prime Minister of the Republic of Cote d'Ivoire;(Thank you very much for taking time to come and bless our event. We know how busy you are and yet you attached sufficient importance to our event to allot your precious time)!**

**Honorable Mme Anne Désirée Ouloto, Minister of Solidarity, Family, Women and Children of the Republic of Cote d'Ivoire; and other Honorable Ministers here present;**

**Excellences Members of Parliament here present;;**

**Excellencies Ambassadors of AU Member States and Head of AU Mission in Cote d'Ivoire;**

**Distinguished Representatives of the UN Agencies ;**

**Distinguished Participants ;;**

**Ladies and gentlemen;**

It is a great honour and special privilege for me to address this important gathering. I first visited Cote d'Ivoire in 1980 as a young university lecturer as of the delegation to a big gathering on university dons organized by the Association of African Universities. The Meeting was in Yamousoukro. We visited not only Abidjan but also Boaki. So I know first hand the beauty of Cote d'Ivoire. The Chairperson of the African Union Commission, H. E. Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, is very passionate about the theme of this exercise, gender equality and empowerment of women. Unfortunately she has had to preside over Africa – India Partnership Ministerial and the Africa – India Business Council meetings in Sandton, South Africa. We need those partnerships to accelerate growth and expeditiously eradicate poverty. I speak here on her behalf. On behalf of H. E. Dr. Nkosazana

Dlamini-Zuma, Chairperson of the African Union Commission, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to His Excellency Dr. Alassane Dramane Ouattara, President of the Republic of Cote d'Ivoire and his team in the Government of Cote d'Ivoire, under the leadership of the Prime Minister and the People of this beautiful country, who made efforts to provide excellent facilities that will certainly make this event a success and fully appreciate courtesies extended. I would also like to express my heart felt gratitude to all of the High Level Panel members on Gender for being relentlessly committed to this noble and highly timely if not somewhat overdue cause of promoting gender equality and striving for women's empowerment on the continent. The African Union Commission urges you to steadfastly adhere to the principles and stay the course in this journey until we reach logical destination in our continent. Allow me to extend a warm welcome to all participants and also to thank all of you for taking time off your busy schedule to be here for this very crucial exercise needed to input into the content of Africa's own Common Position on the Post 2015 development agenda. We have to ensure that women and gender issues are fully captured in the Global Agenda. African Union is herself formulating own Common Position regarding Post – 2015 development agenda as a contribution to the Global one, in one voice, and not in 50+ voices. That is why your inputs during this exercise are so valuable. Your voice counts. Your views will be accommodated.

**Your Excellences**

**Distinguished guests**

**Ladies and gentlemen**

With about 800+ days or so until 2015, the discourse is shifting from an exclusive focus on achieving the MDGs to also reflections and debate on the defining elements of the successor framework—the post-2015 global development agenda. All are agreed that MDGs should be given the last full force push during the remaining time left in terms of both quantity and quality

MDGs have contributed a lot in terms of prioritizing policy on social issues and in mobilizing financing for them . Remarkable advances have been registered in Africa on some of the indicators such as net primary enrollment, gender parity in primary education, appointment and election of women in decision making positions, immunization coverage and halting and even reversing the spread of HIV/AIDS. However, the quality of education and health remains a concern. Progress has been too slow on health-related MDGs such as child and maternal mortality and access to sanitation. Reducing inequity in access to basic social services also remains a critical challenge for Africa and these inequities explain in large measure the continent's slow progress in attaining the health MDGs.

Recognizing the importance for Africa to influence the setting of the new development agenda, the Assembly of Heads of State and Government held in July 2012 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia mandated the AUC in close consultation with Member States and Regional Economic Communities to identify Africa's priorities for the post 2015 development agenda with the support of partners.

To that effect, the Commission in collaboration with partners has undertaken a series of intensive consultations with all relevant stakeholders including governments (members of executive and parliament), regional entities, civil society, academia, youth and the private sector, and came up with an outcome document which served as a basis for the current draft African Common Position.

Four of the major priority areas identified during the consultation are: 1. Structural Economic Transformation and inclusive growth, 2. Research and Development, technology development, transfer and diffusion as well as innovation; 3. Human Development in its broad context, both as an end in itself and as a means towards an end of achieving accelerated, inclusive, resilient and sustainable development; 4. Last, but by no means least, the question of financing all those endeavours, namely by expanding, consolidating and refining partnerships that Africa has and by mobilizing domestic resources.

Achieving the development outcomes requires an enabling environment at national, regional and global levels. Some of the enablers identified for the post-2015 development agenda are Peace and security, Good governance, transparency and fighting corruption, human rights for all, regional integration and strengthened institutional capacity.

Poverty eradication, gender equality and empowerment of women and youth, and minding the environment to ensure sustainable inclusive and resilient socio-economic development, are to remain constant features characterizing all our development endeavours.

The first draft which compiled the views of stakeholders during consultations was presented and discussed by several ministerial and sectoral conferences. The current document is the contribution of all these stakeholders and its contents should be used as basis for further inputs and improvements.

**Your Excellency**

**Distinguished guests**

**Ladies and gentlemen**

Furthermore, the 21st Ordinary Session of the Assembly held in May 2013 requested the AUC in consultation with RECs and relevant Stakeholders to continue to engage Member States including PRC in Addis Ababa and the Africa Group in New York and decided to establish a High level Committee which comprise two Heads of State and Government per region, chaired by Her Excellency Mrs. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, the President of Liberia, to refine the African Common Position.

To implement the decision, the AUC has consulted the African Group of Ambassadors and permanent representatives in Geneva, New York,

Washington D.C. and some of the pertinent organizations including UNICEF, Global Compact, OSSA and World Bank Executive Directors of African constituencies.

After consultations with Regional Deans, the following were chosen to be Members of the HLC:

- West Africa : Liberia (Chair) and Guinea;
- Central Africa: Congo and Chad;
- Eastern Africa: Ethiopia and Mauritius;
- North Africa: Algeria and Mauritania; and
- Southern Africa: South Africa and Namibia.

The AUC organized the inaugural meeting of the HLC on the eve of the UN General Assembly in New York. The meeting adopted the proposed roadmap on how to proceed in refining the draft African Common Position to be presented to the January 2014 Summit.

## **Your Excellency**

### **Distinguished guests**

### **Ladies and gentlemen**

As you well know, progress towards gender equality has been encouraging in Africa. Gender gaps in girl's enrollment in primary education have narrowed in most of the countries and women participation in the labour force and appointment and election into the decision making have increased. However, despite these developments, progress has been slow

and uneven and gender disparities continue to delay eradication of poverty on the continent. .

Therefore, gender equality must be central to the post 2015 development framework. Because of the importance of women empowerment in its own right and the impact that gender inequality has on achieving other development goals.

tThe Common African Position on Post 2015Development Agenda attempts to address the root cause of poverty in all its forms and ensure that nobody, regardless of gender, age, geography, or other status is denied opportunities. Then tackle poverty in a more strategic and tactical manner; that is, in the most effective way. Therefore, we need to create an enabling environment for Africa's economic transformation agenda which includes developing infrastructure and increasing productive capacities in all sectors that will result in accelerated and inclusive economic growth creating adequate decent jobs and lead towards poverty eradication.

I am confident that your inputs will build upon the existing draft African Common Position in order to have a document that addresses what African stakeholders really want bearing in mind other global agenda such as Rio+20 outcome document. I would like to ensure you that your views and inputs will be taken on board as you are at the heart of the development on the continent and you are the ones who will be implementing the agenda. Your contributions ensure your ownership, commitments and faithful to the implementation of the new global agenda.



Women's representative will be invited to be part of the technical working group exercise that will be held on 10-11 October 2013 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia to further refine the draft African Common Position, taking into account various inputs received since the May 2013 AU Summit, for submission to the HLC and then before the January 2013 Summit.

The final document will remain a framework that leaves scope for national and regional policy space, accommodates national and regional peculiarities and specificities and allows room for our negotiators to manoeuvre. Bear in mind that the global agenda will be a negotiated document.

RECs have set their own targets in closing the gender gap. I invite you to visit those targets and assess what progress towards their attainment has been made. The World Economic Forum produces a periodic report on closing the gender gap and rank countries accordingly. Again you may wish to visit that WEF report to compare African countries with the rest of the world. UNDP Human Development Index report has elements relevant to progress being made in empowering women. Check it and analyse the results. The World Bank issued a report not too long ago indicating clearly that investment in women's development and empowerment has a higher rate of return and reduces poverty more than in proportion. It is a sensible, logical, area to invest in for accelerated, sustained and inclusive economic growth and rapid resilient and sustainable socio-economic development, leading to poverty eradication which is what we claim to aspire for.

There are many plans and programmes on this matter. What is needed henceforth is Action! Action! Action! We have good plans but very sluggish implementation moving at snail's pace. Let us programme meticulously, With indicators in place and log-frames, and have an effective monitoring and evaluation system to make progress.

On this note, I would like to wish you all success in you deliberations during this meeting and may the outcome of the meeting be to your satisfaction.

I thank you all for your kind attention.