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Remarks By

H.E Dr. Aisha Abdullahi

**Commissioner for Political Affairs, African Union
Commission**

**At the African Union Committee of Ten Heads of
States on the Reform of the UN Security Council**

Oyo, Republic of Congo

16 May 2014

**Your Excellency, President Denis Sassou Nguesso,
President of the Republic of Congo**

**Your Excellency, President Ernest Bai Koroma,
President of the Republic of Sierra Leone
Coordinator of the Committee of 10**

**Your Excellency, President Theodoro Obiang NGuema,
President of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea**

**Your Excellency, President Nouri Bousahmein,
President of the General Congress of the Republic of Libya**

Your Excellencies Ministers of the Republic of Congo

Your Excellencies, C10 Foreign Ministers

Your Excellency Minister of the Republic of Congo

**Excellencies Permanent Representatives in New York and Addis
Ababa**

Distinguished Delegates

Permit me to begin my brief remarks with felicitations from H.E Dr Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, Chairperson of the African Union Commission. She would have wished to be among us this morning but due to commitments of a similar nature, she sends her best wishes and reaffirms the support of the African Union Commission to the Committee of 10 in executing its historic mandate with regards to the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Reform.

I am delighted and honored to represent the AU Commission at this important first Summit of the Committee of 10 outside the margins of the Assembly. This is yet another unique chance to reflect, deliberate, and strategize on a common African Position on the Reforms of the UN Security Council.

On my behalf and the delegation from the AUC, I would like to thank our gracious host, His Excellency, President Denis Sassou Nguesso, for the warm hospitality accorded us since our arrival in Brazzaville and to this beautiful city of Oyo. I would also like to express our appreciation to His Excellency, President Ernest Bai Koroma for his efforts in providing leadership to the work of the Committee of 10 and for co-convening this meeting. Let me add that this visionary leadership inspires us and is a testimony to the importance the African Union attaches to this process. We are looking forward to frank conversations, unity and consensus building that would emerge here to guide the work of the African Union towards Africa's legitimate demands on the reform of the United Nations Security Council.

Your Excellencies,

The subject matter of your gathering here needs little introduction. It is an issue whose time has come and is indeed long overdue.

For years, Africa has remained on the margins of the global legal and institutional order. Since the 1990s, we have demanded for equity and fairness at the UN. We have called for more representation, inclusiveness, accountability and transparency in decision-making. We believe this is a fair demand on an institution we have remained committed to the ideals of since its inception.

While it was possible to ignore our voices and demands in the past, today, Africa, has truly come of age. The once dubbed sleeping giant has woken up and is rising with greater unity of purpose, determination and resolve. Our meeting here and indeed the entire work of the Committee of 10, makes a compelling case for consensus building. We

are called upon to find a lasting solution on the reform of the UN Security Council.

The significance of this Committee of 10 is immense. There is no doubt that given the diversity of our People and Member States, we are bound to have competing interests and positions. It is therefore not an easy task, but it is one that we are well prepared for.

I would like to urge that we focus on the core purpose and work at the centre of these negotiations. We must remain resolute on the need for a UN that is ready to adapt and respond to the prevailing geopolitical reality of the global system. While we may have different ideas and approaches on how to get that done, at the very least we must agree on the need for equity and fairness in the UN system. I am therefore confident that we will work in earnest to reach consensus.

I would encourage that we remain open and frank to each other whilst focusing on the goal. So far, the intergovernmental negotiations on the reform of the UN Security Council have been protracted and almost stalled. While there are many versions and interpretations of the status quo, it is imperative to always remember that we are the losers with the status quo. We must remain steadfast and resolute on the course.

Excellencies,

I would like to suggest that we shift gears a notch higher internally as we engage the World on this. We must invest in much more intense political mobilization. The conversation and negotiations must not only remain in Addis Ababa and New York. We must get into the field and mobilize

support for our position. Our Member States capitals must be ready and willing to engage creatively and innovatively on this matter.

Our strategy should therefore adopt among others shuttle diplomacy and engagement with not only the African group but in equal measure our counterparts from other regions of the World. We must take advantage of the relationship with both our traditional and new allies, whilst we must be conscious of their interests and divergent views. Indeed, while it is important to keep the Ezulwilini consensus as our principled position let us deliberate and agree in this meeting to negotiate with others idealistically but pragmatically. We must move resolutely to solidify and concretize the alliances with those groups which hold similar position as the African Common Position, as long as all its aspects are preserved.

The Committee of 10 has its work cut out. The urgency and breadth of this assignment requires concerted action and effort. Importantly it requires visionary leadership and guidance.

Africa must occupy its rightful place in the global legal and institutional order. This is in line with what we are globally seeking through the implementation of Africa Agenda 2063. Our demand for two permanent seats in the UN Security Council with veto powers, and five non-permanent seats, are just but a part of the reform that we are committed to see at the UN as a whole. It is therefore not just about membership to the UN Security Council but comprehensive UN reforms.

Excellencies,

On my behalf and that of the African Union Commission, I would like to reaffirm our commitment and support to this process and the Committee

of 10. We remain at the disposal of the Committee to offer technical, budgetary, logistical and political support, subject to the will of our Member States. We will leave no resources behind to ensure that Africa claims and occupies its rightful place in the global legal and institutional order.

This is certainly in line with our vision of an "integrated, prosperous, peaceful Africa driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the global arena".

I thank you