

**AFRICAN UNION**

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**Message of**

**H.E. Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma**

**Chairperson of the African Union Commission**

**on the Commemoration of “AFRICA DAY”**

**25 MAY 2016**

**Fellow Africans on the Continent and in the Diaspora,  
Our Friends and Supporters across the globe,**

On this historic day of May 25, celebrating the 53<sup>rd</sup> Anniversary of the foundation of our beloved Continental Organization, the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), now the African Union (AU), allow me to extend my warmest and most sincere best wishes for Africa Day as we celebrate continued progress by all daughters and sons of our beloved continent.

This year, we commemorate this special day as we seek continental transformation, take stock and reflect on the achievements in the search of a better life for all the segments of the African people. We all aspire for a well-governed and prosperous Africa under the basic tenets of democracy, rule of law and full respect of human and peoples' rights. We do so under the Theme: "Year of Human Rights, with particular focus on the Rights of Women;" a theme, which is, indeed, both an opportunity and a challenge for all Africans.

The African Union has created many frameworks and normative instruments to achieve an inclusive, democratic and prosperous continent, most of which have been ratified by our Member States. Yet, many challenges still lie ahead to effectively ensure these critical norms and laws become a reality for our people. This cannot happen without the collaborative efforts of the Government, Civil Society Organisations and other stakeholders. Malawi is a recent example having established a body whose sole responsibility is to ensure that all African Union Protocols, Charters and Treaties are ratified and domesticated.

## **Fellow Africans,**

We must ask ourselves critical, legitimate and tough questions as we embark on the fulfilment of the AU's Vision for an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and having a strong voice in the international arena. This is THE AFRICA WE WANT, as expressed by our people in Agenda 2063. The First 10-year Implementation Plan is already being executed. By issuing the African passport to our Heads of State and Government during the Kigali Summit in July this year, we hope to accelerate the free movement of people, goods and services as one of our Flagship Projects.

Our continental vision can only be successfully realised if we collectively work with Member States, as well as all other stakeholders, including civil society, private sector, religious institutions, academia and the media. We all are in this together.

Yes, good governance and inclusive democracy are important but human rights go beyond. Human rights are about investing in Africa's most precious resource, the over one billion people, the majority of whom are young, and over half of whom are women. It is about investing in their health, quality education, access to basic services and infrastructure, freedom to move across the continent and benefiting our rich natural resources. Human rights are, indeed, a fine balance between civic and socio-economic aspirations, which will render for us a continent that is peaceful and people centered and playing a dynamic role in the world.

This year we want to focus on women's rights; it is our fundamental obligation and because it makes economic sense. Investing in our women is a guarantee for sustainable peace, community stability and cohesion. Investing in women contributes to the prosperity of families, communities and the continent.

**Fellow Africans,**

Agenda 2063, THE AFRICA WE WANT, gives us a clear sense of where we want to go. But we must realize that this cannot happen without a strong commitment and reflection on Pan Africanism and the principle of African solidarity, which we have demonstrated before in our liberation struggles and recent fight against Ebola. For this, I am confident that once again, we will rise to the occasion to accelerate the implementation of our key priorities and programmes.

Therefore, as we commemorate this important day, let us re-dedicate ourselves to Africa and to the ideals bequeathed to us by our Founding Mothers and Fathers. Together, we can facilitate Africa's integration, unity and shared values of prosperity and lasting peace for all.

**Long live Africa and her Diaspora!**

**Long live African unity and solidarity!**

**Happy Africa Day!**

**Thank you. Merci. Shukran. Muito obrigado**