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**Welcome remarks on the Occasion of the visit of the President  
of the Republic of Korea Her Excellency Ms. Park Geun-hey**

Nelson Mandela Hall, African Union Headquarters  
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

- **The Honourable Park Geun-hey, President of the Republic of Korea**
- **Your Excellency, Ato Hailemariam Desalegn, Prime Minister of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia**
- **Esteemed Ministers, Honourable Members and Distinguished Members of the South Korean Delegation**
- **Esteemed Ministers, Members of Parliament, Government leaders and officials of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia**
- **AU Commissioners, representatives of AU organs and Regional Economic Communities**
- **Excellencies, representatives of the Permanent Representatives Committee**
- **Representatives of UNECA and UN Agencies**
- **Excellencies, Members of the Diplomatic Corps and International agencies and institutions**
- **African Union Commission Staff**

### **Ladies and Gentlemen**

I wish to extend a very warm welcome to you Madame President PARK Geun-hey, and your delegation to Addis Ababa, Africa's capital. This is indeed a historic visit, it being the first time a Head of State from the Republic of Korea visits our Union.

This visit also holds a special place in our hearts since Madame President you are the first woman Head of State in the Republic of Korea. This visit also occurs during the **African Year of Human Rights with a particular Focus on the Rights of Women.**

**Madame President, Mr Prime Minister, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen**

South Korea and all of our founding member states achieved their independence almost at the same time in the 1960's. However the fortunes of South Korea and that of our Member States have not been the same.

I wish to take this opportunity to congratulate the founding mothers and fathers of South Korea and subsequent leaders for having stayed the course and for having turned their fortune within a single a generation.

Congratulations!!!

We concur with the academic Colin Bradford's conclusions that:

*"The South Korean success story is a story about intentionality, about the capacity of a society to define its future rather than to be passively lifted by market forces alone, and about the role of leadership, institutions, a narrative in determining destiny".*

Inspired by this success story and stories from other developmental states, we also decided to take our destiny into our own hands. Madame President as you may know when we celebrated 50 years of the Organisation of African Unity (now AU), we accelerated our efforts to secure *an integrated prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the global arena.*

**Madame President;**

In developing our 50year plan to secure the Africa We Want we looked to South Korea and other developing nations for inspiration. In constructing Agenda 2063: the Africa We Want, we learnt from South Korea's rise that strong states and institutions are an important driver for the type of development required to lift our people out of poverty and inequality. The developmental state model developed in South Korea and in other parts of East Asia is the basis of our aspirations,

particularly those that relate to inclusive growth as well as accountable states and institutions.

When we developed our 50year plan, many questioned the wisdom of developing such a long-term strategy. Again we looked to South Korea for inspiration, understanding that one could not have a full proof plan. We learnt that one has to develop an overarching plan and draw lessons as we implement. I am pleased to inform you Your Excellency that we are doing just that with our first ten-year implementation plan.

The rise of South Korea was also informed by the focus on comparative strengths and capabilities, and where those were short they were developed in strategic sectors. Our own skills revolution, which is to support the priority projects of Agenda 2063, is based on this understanding.

Our revolution, very much like that of South Korea, will ensure that we focus on developing skills especially in the Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) fields. For this we will look to our partnership with South Korea, amongst others.

Already some member states are developing these much needed skills, including the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, which is represented by Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn here in this gathering. Ethiopia already has an enrolment of 70% of students in the STEM areas and 30% in social sciences. We hope that all our member states will follow.

**Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,** Africa has the one of the largest coastlines, which is effectively three times its landmass. Consequently, we have identified the development of the blue economy as an important element for the implementation of Agenda 2063. As you may know more than two thirds of our

Member States are either coastal or island states, we must therefore look to the ocean to spur on our development.

We have seen the progress made by South Korea in all areas of the blue economy, particularly as it relates to shipbuilding. We are thankful for the support she has given to some of our member states. It is our hope that our future collaborations will also be a strong element.

We have also noted the manner in which the industrialization project has been undertaken in South Korea, which has been based on growth-driven trade from the inside outward. For us this indicates the importance internal dynamism.

**Madame President,** Allow me to conclude by returning where I started. We have noted the progress made by South Korea in relation to some aspects of gender equality. Today through your efforts, South Korea has made headway in the realm of women's rights.

We wish to applaud you and your government for these efforts which have tackled social ills such as domestic and sexual violence, and violence in schools. Your efforts, as we have seen, have also rejuvenated the Korean economy, to create jobs and economic opportunities. By involving women the entire society is involved --- this makes economic sense.

**Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,** We believe this to be an important partnership for Africa given the comparative strengths and capabilities that South Korea possesses and that Africa has.

We will look to this partnership to strengthen our expertise and programmes in manufacturing, infrastructure, maritime, skills development, amongst other mutually identified priority areas.

We will also look to this partnership to strength our technical, vocational and higher education systems. We look forward to our collaborations in relation to innovation, science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

We also hope to find further inspiration in South Korea's commitment to developmental government.

This partnership offers for us much hope. The AU Commission, the Regional Economic Communities and Member States therefore look forward to working on these issues, and we believe that the Memoranda of Understanding we will sign will go a long way towards concretising these areas of cooperation.

We have also noted the rise of South Korea as an influential and constructive contributor to global governance. As we continue to press for the reform of global institutions of governance I am certain that we can continue to rely on South Korea's support.

**Madame President**

We, like you, believe in peace in the world.

I wish you a constructive and pleasant stay in our capital and once again thank you for coming to our Union I thank you and wish to offer your Excellency the podium to address us ....