



**Opening Remarks by Ambassador Jean Mfasoni, Special Advisor to the
Chairperson of the African Union Commission on the occasion of the
Session of the African Union Leadership Academy on Executive Diplomatic
Experience Sharing Program**

Johannesburg, 27 September 2016

**Excellencies Ambassadors,
Excellencies the PRC Members,
Honorable Representatives of the PAP,
Distinguished Guests and Participants,
Colleagues,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It gives me a great pleasure, on behalf of our Chairperson of the Commission, Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, to welcome all of you to this experience sharing and learning seminar organized by the African Union Leadership Academy. I am mostly honored to chair the Opening Ceremony this morning.

This seminar is of particularly importance which would enable Members of PRC which is central to the work of the AU in light of its mandate as enshrined in its Rules of Procedure. This seminar is part of a series of executive diplomatic experience sharing. The event provides us with a unique opportunity to share perspectives and dialogue on the closely related themes, which would shape our progress towards achieving agenda 2063.

At this stage, let me convey my special thanks to our colleagues from the Pan African Parliament for welcoming all of us most warmly to the beautiful place in Midrand, in a country, South Africa, which so dear in our hearts. All of them have been working with us since the beginning of the planning stage and they are still here today for all of us, even though they are very busy with their normal and daily responsibilities at their honorable institution, the PAP whose role and place, present and future, is critical in the life of our Union and expected to gradually grow into a fully-fledged legislative body as anticipated in its Malabo Protocol of

2014. .

Secondly, let me profusely apologize on behalf of the Commission, for the shortcomings in the organization and logistics of this first seminar for our Distinguished Ambassadors. The AU Leadership Academy launched just in January this year is a young institution of the Union which however has the onerous ambition to promote good practices in sharing best experiences and cross-fertilizing among the main actors in the making and strengthening of the dealings of our Union. We would like to assure this distinguished gathering that a thorough evaluation will be undertaken after this seminar to correct all shortcomings and organizational loopholes so as to make such an interaction a very fruitful one. For now, we beg your indulgence to your Excellencies to accept our apologies and I can assure you that we shall work more closely with you in the future series of workshops/seminars to make them most fruitful in their substantial achievements in a very conducive atmosphere.

Before proceeding further, I would like to give you a brief introduction about the African Union Leadership Academy (AULA).

The African Union Leadership Academy, as you have all witnessed, was officially launched at the 26th AU Summit in January 2016, and started its training sessions in the past few months. The vision of the Academy is to become a high level Pan African learning and development agency driving capacity building solutions to the challenges of managing the process of realization of the African Union Agenda 2063.

The Academy aspires to work in concert with Member States, and relevant institutions worldwide, in developing and delivering innovative capacity building solutions for the AU decision-making, policy and program development within the framework of the Constitutive Act of the African Union.

The academy focuses on giving its target groups the opportunity to sharpen their skills and improve their performance in order to build positive and steady results that feed directly into agenda 2063

Accordingly it offers unique, hands-on, high-engagement learning opportunities for leaders to understand and adopt new behaviors and ideas, network with peers, learn from a world-class faculty and enhance their own capabilities. The Academy has so far successfully implemented 3 batches of learning, and sharing of experience, policy dialogues and training for around 90 officials from the AU and Member States.

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Equally worthy noting is the fact that as a Pan-African institution, the AU has made considerable progress in taking a greater lead in the integration of the

African continent and in global front, in promoting democratic governance, preventing conflicts, respect of rule of law and human rights and curbing unconstitutional changes of government, as well as supporting the realization of flagship projects crucial for the accelerated socio-economic development and integration of our continent. This progress did not happen overnight, and there was a long way and continuous discussion for the policy development and reshaping of the AU and its organs, to adjust to the new challenges of our time so as to advance its set agenda in a most complex globalized world, having at heart the continual progress of Africa and its peoples.

The AU was created at the beginning of the new millennium, and outfitted with a new Constitutive Act and institutions, giving renewed push to African integration and unity.

The objectives and principles of the Union, as set out in Articles 3 and 4, include clear provisions for the promotion of democratic institutions, observance of human rights, rule of law and the equitable management of gender issues and youth development, with a view to strengthening popular participation and democratic and political dispensation.

In comparison to its predecessor, the OAU, the AU has a much broader set of objectives, including the accelerated integration which is indeed its *raison d'être*, advancing democratic principles and institutions, popular participation and good governance; human and peoples' rights, peace, security, stability and development, whereas the OAU Charter was primarily focusing on the liberation and independence of African nations, protection of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and development and cooperation among African states.

Agenda 2063 project paints a picture of what Africa we want, so as to achieve our aspirations and those of the future generations, taking into account the past experiences of the African Union and its predecessor the OAU, including both their successes and failures.

The dream and aspirations of our continent, which everyone and each of us we are called to contribute to achieve are summarized as follows:

1. A prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development;
2. An integrated continent, politically united and based on the ideals of Pan Africanism and the vision of Africa's Renaissance;
3. An Africa of good governance, democracy, respect for human rights, justice and the rule of law;
4. A peaceful and secure Africa;
5. An Africa with a strong cultural identity, common heritage, values and ethics;

6. An Africa where development is people-driven, unleashing the potential of its women and youth
7. An Africa which is a strong, united and influential global player and partner.

This means that, by 2063, African countries will be amongst the best performers in global quality of life. This can only be attained through common strategies for inclusive growth, job creation, increasing agricultural production, investments in science, technology, research and innovation, gender equality, youth empowerment and the provision of basic services including health, nutrition, education, shelter, water and sanitation.

In order for the AU, its Member States and its organs to contribute effectively to this vision and to fulfill the set mandates, there is a need to have a common understanding on how to get there and what are the respective responsibilities of each party. This experience sharing seminar will help us towards this direction.

The first session of the seminar will focus on the AU's role in promoting African integration and the progress made in the last few years. In this session, we are hoping to critically review the progress made and how to strengthen it as well as to review and analyze lessons learned. The seminar is facilitated by two eminent professors who are specialized in the African Union and African affairs, Professor Tim Murithi and Professor Katabaro. We count also on your Excellencies Ambassadors and Members of the PRC to equally facilitate our proceedings in an interactive and cross-fertilizing fashion.

We look forward to a successful seminar over the next 3 days and I strongly encourage you all to become actively engaged in the various sessions and discussions.

Finally, this is an opportune time for me to declare the official opening of this "Executive Diplomatic Experience Sharing Program". I wish all 3 fruitful days of interesting and beneficial program and also a pleasant stay in this great and beautiful country, South Africa.

I warmly welcome you again. Thank you for your kind attention. Let me lastly wish you a very successful exchange.

Merci beaucoup. Shukran. Muito obrigada.