

Draft
Remarks by Commissioner Mustapha Sidiki Kaloko, Commissioner of Social Affairs, on the Occasion of the AUC-US High Level Dialogue

AUC Premises, Addis Ababa, December 2016

Mr. Bruce Wharton, Acting Under Secretary of State
Amb. Mary Beth Leonard, U.S. Ambassador to the African Union
Mr. Chris Runyan, USAID Deputy Assistant Administrator
Director, Robert Scott, U.S. Department of State's Africa Bureau
Mr. Mike Bittrick, Deputy Director, Office of Security Affairs, Bureau of African Affairs
Partners and Colleagues,

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to the premises of the African Union Commission, on the occasion of our Fourth High Level Dialogue.

The African Continent and the United States of America share a longstanding and deep historic and cultural relations, earned through decades of friendship and active engagement. Although our strategic partnership MOU was signed only in 2013, the United States has historically been a strong supporter of the African Union since its inception. For example, the United States was the first partner to open a dedicated mission to the African Union.

The African Union recognizes the strong bipartisan support that Africa has enjoyed over the years from the U.S. Government's Executive and Legislative Branches, and look forward to its continuity for decades to come. The partnership between the United States and the African Union has been growing in support of an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa. It is in our shared strategic interests, as well as our mutual benefit to promote the political, security and economic development of the Continent.

Africa is grateful for the various commendable initiatives the U.S. Administration has taken thus far to invest in the continent young leaders, through the Mandela Washington Fellow Program, build healthcare capacity throughout Africa, as well as in education, entrepreneurship, trade and energy through Power Africa. The success of these initiatives will have benefits for generations to come.

Looking back, we have collaborated on saving the Continent and the world from real crises such as Ebola last year, and our joint initiative of establishing the Africa Centers for Disease Control to ensure that Africa has the capacity to prevent, detect and

respond to outbreaks of disease. We have also worked together to open up new economic opportunities through the reauthorization of AGOA for ten additional years, and through the support that the U.S. Government has provided to the Continental Free Trade Area. It is thanks to the concerted efforts of our Trade and Industry Department together with USAID and a number of other partners that trade in services was back on the negotiations table for the CFTA, for example. We also worked together on empowering youth and women on the Continent, through synergistic work of our respective programs.

We aspire for expanding this relationship to achieve new frontiers. On the economic front, we attach a particular importance to the effective implementation of AGOA and taking full advantage of the program during the remaining nine years period of the Legislation. We are also in dialogue on the U.S. trade policy towards Africa post-AGO. On the social protection front, we are discussing collaboration on protection of labor rights in general, and under AGOA in specific. Also, the promotion of peace, security and stability in Africa will continue to be critically important to the achievement of the African Union vision of a free and peaceful and prosperous continent.

The African Continent has chosen the framework of Agenda 2063 as its development framework for the next fifty years. Its first ten year implementation plan was adopted by Heads of States, and has been domesticated in most Member States. This means that the Continent shares a common results framework that is cascaded down to the sub-regional and national levels. The Continent also adopts a common strategy for resource mobilization under Agenda 2063 that is implemented independently at the continental, sub-regional and national levels.

The effective implementation of Agenda 2063 rides on the commitment of our partners to the results aspired by the African people. This framework provides us with an opportunity to broaden and deepen our strategic partnership. The African Union is confident that it can rely on U.S public and private engagement to enhance its support to regional approaches and further promote cross-border collaborations in all spheres in order to build the Africa we all want as a strong, united, resilient and influential global player.

The sustained and predictable support of Africa's strategic partners is still needed to ensure peace and security at a time the continent continues to grapple with urgent conflicts and crises situations and evolving security challenges. The African Union is committed to mobilize adequate resources that would go towards financing the Continent's development and integration agenda as well as peace and security operations as reflected in the decision taken by the last AU summit held in Kigali in July 2016.

In the course of discussions today, you will be reviewing progress made under this strategic partnership, as well as will be forward looking. It is our duty today to be both thoughtful and critical, and to ensure that the outcome of this meeting appropriately informs our upcoming respective transitions in leadership so our strong institutions can continue to underpin this cooperation framework for our mutual interests.

I thank you and wish you successful deliberations.