

AFRICAN UNION

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UNIÃO AFRICANA

ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA P. O. BOX 3243 TELEPHONE: 011-551 7700

FAX: 011-551 7844, WEBSITE: www.africa-union.org

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**Statement by the
Outgoing Chairperson of the African Union Commission,
H.E. Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma
to the 28th Ordinary Session of the
Assembly Heads of State and Government
of the African Union**

AU Headquarters, Addis Ababa. Ethiopia.
31 January 2017

Your Excellency, Professor Alpha Conde, President of the Republic of Guinea and Chairperson of the African Union

Your Excellencies, Heads of State and Government,

Excellencies, Former Heads of State and former Secretaries General and Chairpersons of the OAU and AU

Excellencies, Ministers, Leaders of Organs, RECs, Representative offices, Ambassadors, Officials

Excellencies, President of the AfDB, Ag. Executive Secretary of UNECA

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

Let me begin by thanking you, Chairperson and all Your Excellencies, for giving me this opportunity to address you.

Congratulations on a very successful summit, that dealt with important issues critical to the well-being of Africa and African people, especially its youth.

You entrusted me to head the African Union Commission, whose mandate you extended for 6 months.

Our sincere congratulations to the new members of the Commission, led by our brother H.E. Moussa Faki Mahamat, as incoming Chairperson of the AU, on your election and to wish you success in the important work on behalf of all the citizens of Africa. Congratulations to the Deputy and all Commissioners elected.

For me and the out-going Commission members, it has been an absolute and humbling privilege. For us as African to serve, there is

no service more important, more honourable or more rewarding than to serve our Continent and the citizens of Africa.

Excellencies,

Throughout our tenure, we enjoyed the support and cooperation of all Heads of State and Government, the Governments and citizens of Africa.

The Executive Council, the NEPAD Agency, the PRC, the RECs, Organs and our strategic partners, the AfDB, UNECA and ACBF all cooperated with us to push forward our mission of an effective, self-reliant, integrated, cohesive and people-centred Union. We work together in Strategic partnership with the RECs, ADB, UNECA, ACBF to forward our goal of a people centred, integrated Union.

We also thank the African civil society in its diversity, especially the women's movement of the continent, for their support and enthusiasm to work with us to build a People's Union. We thank business people, workers, academics, faithbased organisations, artists, who worked with us.

We also thank the AU Partners Group for their cooperation and support, on many critical issues, throughout our term.

The out-going Commission owes a big debt of gratitude to the staff of the African Union Commission and I want to take this opportunity to salute and thank each and everyone of you. Whatever achievements we have made could not have been possible without your tireless efforts, dedication, hard work and commitment to Africa. I always believe that any leadership is as good as its team, so thank you to Team AU. I urge that you continue to give your best to Africa as our anthem said and in the same spirit with the in-coming Commission.

Excellencies

**Ladies and Gentlemen
Distinguished Guests**

Whatever we have accomplished as a Commission could not have been done in a calm and good atmosphere, without the support of the Government and People of the Federal Democratic of Ethiopia and particularly the People of the City of Addis Ababa and the local Administration. In their usual quiet, courteous and generous ways they welcomed their sisters and brothers from all over Africa and have taken in stride together, to work towards the burdens of responsibility that come with hosting the We are proud of this Headquarters. I once said to the Prime Minister of Ethiopia is a sovereign state, but not as sovereign as others, because you are our capital and we have a stake in this country. We thank you Mr. Prime Minister, Hailemariam Desaglen and Ministers, Government. I thank Ethiopia most sincerely.

We joined the Commission coming from different backgrounds, cultures and experiences. Each with a different perspective and each with a personal vision of what the African Union should be. We strived to be coherent, to work as one, as a team.

I thank all Commissioners for the cooperation and the work they did. A special thank you to Deputy Chairperson Erastus Mwencha who had responsibility for our finances and administration. We thank him.

**Your Excellencies;
Distinguished Guests;
Ladies and Gentlemen:**

As I take the final bow as Chairperson of the African Union Commission, I am satisfied with the strong foundations in place for Africa's success.

We leave behind a Union that has Agenda 2063 which reflects the aspiration of African citizens; a Union on its route to self-reliance; a Union pushing ahead on integration and a Union engaged in fundamental reforms to enable it to better serve the African agenda and Peoples. We are a Union on the way to silencing the guns.

This Summit took a historic decision to reunite the African community of states, with its decision on the membership of the Kingdom of Morocco by consensus. This provides a platform to strengthen African solutions to African problems, in furtherance of the principles and objectives of the Constitutive Act of our Union. We leave a Union with all African states present, a Union of 55 Member states. A warm welcome to the Kingdom of Morocco.

We leave behind a Union, whose voice in the international community is stronger, especially when we adopt and promote common African positions.

Excellencies

Ladies and Gentlemen

Distinguished Guests

The strength of Africa lies in its unity and its Pan-Africanism. When our forebears united, Africa was able to win its independence from colonialism against countries with armies and economies far bigger than ours. We should, therefore, never allow ourselves to be divided by anyone, or by anything. We should, as much as possible, coordinate our positions and adopt common positions. Let us stand or fall together! But we will not fall. Forward ever, backward never!

I have no doubt that the in-coming Commission will continue to strengthen and build upon these foundations, just like we build on the foundations that we found in 2012.

For sure, there will continue to be challenges. I believe, however, that no challenge is insurmountable in the face of determination, persistence and self-belief.

For my part, and for my fellow Commissioners wherever I shall be and in whatever capacity, I shall forever remain soldiers of the African cause.

I thank you

Merci beaucoup,

Mucho Obrigado,

Shukran,

Asante Sana,

Ame se gna lehu!