

AFRICAN UNION

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**Statement of the outgoing Chairperson of the
AU Commission,**

**H.E. Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma on the occasion of the
Handover to the incoming AU Commission**

Nelson Mandela Conference Hall

14 March 2017, Addis Ababa

Your Excellency Prof. Alpha Conde, President of the Republic of Guinea and AU Chairperson

Excellency, Mr. Maluto Teshome, President of Ethiopia

Excellency, President Yorewi Musiveni, President of the Republic of Uganda

Excellency President of the Republic of Niger, Mr. Mahamadou Issoufou

Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Swaziland, Mr. Barnabas Sibusiso Dlamini

Prime Minister of Republic of Algeria, Mr. Abdelmalek Sellal

Excellency Louise Mushikiwabo, Foreign Minister of Republic of Rwanda

Excellency Hissein Brahim Taha, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Integration of the Republic of Chad

Excellencies, Heads of State and Government, Members of the Union Bureau and Excellencies AU Champions

Your Excellency, Incoming Chairperson of the Commission, Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat

Excellencies, Ministers and representatives of the Ethiopian Government and Peoples

Excellencies, Ambassadors, Members of the Permanent Representatives Committee

Excellencies, Representatives of the Diplomatic Corps and UN and other Agencies

Liaison Officers of the Regional Economic Communities.

Representatives of Civil society

AU Commission Staff

Members of the Fourth Estate

Ladies and Gentlemen

I am greatly honoured to stand before you representatives of African states and people in Nelson Mandela Hall, Addis Ababa and to hand over the baton to the new Chairperson of the AU Commission, My Brother Moussa Faki Mahamat.

It has indeed been a humbling privilege to serve the people of the continent in the capacity as Chairperson of the AU Commission.

As we pass on the baton and responsibility to the Incoming Commission, I am reminded of the words of one of our Founders, Excellency Kwame Nkrumah, when he said:

“...the task ahead is great indeed, and heavy is the responsibility; and yet it is a noble and glorious challenge –

(It is) a challenge which calls for the courage to dream, the courage to believe, the courage to dare, the courage to do, the courage to envision, the courage to fight, the courage to work, the courage to achieve - to achieve the highest excellences and the fullest greatness of (humanity).

Dare we ask for more in life?”

Taking courage from our founders, this last four and a half years have solidified my belief that we can and will succeed as a continent, but there are a number of critical ingredients.

The first is **unity and solidarity**, which has been our inheritance from the early Pan Africanists, and those who formed the Pan African Women’s Organisation and the Organisation of African Unity. This unity and solidarity is what led to success in our struggles against colonialism and apartheid, and will see us succeed in the mission of our generations.

The second is **belief and confidence in ourselves**. Like other regions of humanity, we have ancient civilizations and cultures, and heroes and heroines, both past and present. We must build on this and develop our African identity, amongst all generations of Africans.

The third is as Kwame says ***courage***. We already had the courage to envision the Africa we want, through the aspirations that are contained in Agenda 2063.

We now have the courage to always and everywhere put Africa first, to innovate, and to learn from our successes and our failures.

Last, but not least, is ***determination***, hard work and focus. Africans in governments, in the RECs, in civil society, from east to west, central, north and south must be determined and work tirelessly to achieve our generational mission of an integrated, peaceful and prosperous Africa, and lay the foundations in our lifetime. This, as Nkrumah said, calls for courage to work and to achieve.

These things are all within our powers. Indeed, dare we ask for more in life!

Excellencies,

After 27 years in prison, Nelson Mandela observed that when you reach the top of one hill and sit to enjoy the vista, you see that there are many more hills to climb.

As the outgoing Commission was about to end its duties, we realized we were faced with the huge hill of the famine in South Sudan and Somalia, exacerbated by conflicts in these two countries.

We then wrote to Heads of State and Government for concrete and urgent solidarity with the two countries, and the Chairperson of the Union and the new Commission will take this forward. We also appeal to civil society, the private sector and African citizens to respond to the calls for solidarity with our sisters and brothers from Somalia, South Sudan and other countries.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

Let me once again take this opportunity to extend words of gratitude to all who supported the Commission during our term: the Heads of State and Government, who guided our work, who domesticated Agenda 2063 in their countries and who took on various tasks to champion the cause of Africa.

We thank the Members of the Executive Council and Ministers who took part in the Ministerial Retreats, Specialised Technical Committees and other work

of the Union, monitoring our work on Agenda 2063, constantly encouraging and pushing us to do more.

Many thanks to the Permanent Representative Committee, who together with us carried the flag of our Union.

We once again are appreciative of civil society, the women's and youth movements, for their steadfast determination to make sure that they build a People's Union.

Our gratitude to the NEPAD Agency, the AU organs, the Regional Economic Communities, who worked with us to ensure that integration remains at the centre of our continental agenda.

We thank the AU Partners Group and our international partners and governments, who worked with us towards building a better world for all.

I am also very encouraged with the cooperation between the African Union and the United Nations over these last four and a half years. To this effect, we have agreed to work together on a single monitoring and reporting mechanism on Agenda 2063 and the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

It is for this reason that I think it would be a good idea for the African Union to have a mechanism for direct interaction with the African Permanent Representatives in New York, as a way of strengthening this bilateral relationship of our two institutions. We should continue to strengthen the Regional Coordination Mechanism between the AU, UN Agencies and the AfDB on the continent.

Our gratitude again to Team AU, the staff of the Commission, including those in the representative and liaison offices, in the specialized agencies, who as Pan African public servants, carry the work of the Union.

Addis Ababa and Ethiopia, the capital of Africa, have been good to us, and became a second home, thanks to the generosity and friendship of the peoples and government of Ethiopia.

Last, but not least, to Deputy Chairperson Erastus Mwencha and fellow Commissioners, who served with me during these four and a half years, thank you for your team spirit and for your commitment and support.

We are handing over our reports to the new Commission, on the work we have done since we took office on 15 October 2012. These are internal documents, but the outgoing Commission has also produced a coffee table book of its work for the general public. A few hard copies will be distributed to Member States, and it will be available as an e-book on Amazon, Kobo and Kindle, within the coming week.

My Brother Moussa Faki, Deputy Chairperson and your fellow Commissioners

We had a very good joint Retreat between the Incoming and Outgoing Commission, which was conducted in a spirit of collegiality and honest exchange. We hope this will help you and your team to determine how you will take forward this great responsibility that Africa has bestowed on you.

We are confident that the new Commission shall succeed, with the support of Heads of State and Government, the Executive Council, the PRC, with the AU Organs and RECs and with the AU Staff. We are also grateful to the Chair of the Union, who decided to give more support to the Commission, by appointing champions for a number of priority areas.

My brother Moussa Faki Mahamat, good luck, bon chance on your journey and till we meet again.

Merci

Obrigado

Asante Sana

Shukran

Amesgenalehou

Siyabonga