

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF ZIMBABWE, HIS EXCELLENCY R.G. MUGABE ON THE OCCASION OF THE HANDOVER OF THE PROCEEDS OF THE CATTLE DONATION TO THE AFRICAN UNION FOUNDATION: 3 JULY 2017, ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

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

Your Excellencies, Heads of State and Government;

Your Excellency, Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the African Union Commission;

Excellencies;

Ladies and Gentlemen.

In June 2015, I attended a fund raising dinner hosted by the African Union Foundation, on the margins of the 24th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the Union, held in Johannesburg, South Africa. You will recall that the 24th Assembly, which I had the pleasure to preside over, was dominated by the debate on alternative and innovative ways of financing our Union. In the spirit of the occasion, I pledged 300 cattle from my personal herd

towards capacitating the then newly established African Union Foundation. You see, as an African and a farmer, a donation of cattle came natural to me given that our continent is rich in cattle and cattle are held as a store of wealth.

When I returned to Zimbabwe and informed my Party and People of this pledge, they said to me; “Comrade President this is a very innovative idea for a very noble cause and we would like to be part of it”. They therefore joined hands and mobilized more cattle, over and above my personal pledge, that were then auctioned across the country in order to augment my contribution. The AU Foundation Chief Executive, Mr. Dumisani Mngadi visited Zimbabwe in May 2017 and witnessed first-hand some of these cattle sales. I was most gratified that this noble cause had resonated well with my Party and People who made it possible for my initial pledge to be more than doubled.

Your Excellencies,

I am aware that this humble gesture on our part has no universal application but it demonstrates what is possible when we apply our minds to the most urgent task before us of finding alternative and innovative ways of funding our Union and in particular our Agenda 2063. As I have said before in this Assembly, unless and until we can fund our own programmes, the African Union will not be truly our own.

The historic decision we took in Johannesburg to progressively increase our assessed contributions to the African Union so that we can, in the next five years, finance 100% of our operational budget, 75% of our programme budget and 25% of our peacekeeping budget is the beginning of the restoration of our dignity and integrity as a continent. It is never going to be easy to wean ourselves from the donor dependence syndrome but we need to forge ahead for our sake and that of future generations.

This modest contribution I am making today is a symbolic step in that direction.

And so today, as I honour the pledge I made almost a year and a half ago, I would like to challenge all of us here present, and the African citizenry at large to contribute each and in his or her own way to the African Union Foundation for the development of this great continent of ours. Together let us build our continent brick by brick, stone by stone until we achieve “ the Africa we want” as envisaged on our blueprint Agenda 2063.

With these few remarks it is my pleasure and privilege to handover to you, Your Excellency, Mr. Chairman, a cheque of **One millions United States Dollars** being proceeds of the Sale of 2000 heads of cattle for the capacitation of the African Union Foundation.

I thank you.