

STATEMENT OF  
**H.E. Mr. MOUSSA FAKI MAHAMAT,**  
CHAIRPERSON OF THE COMMISSION,  
**AT THE EXTRAODINARY SESSION OF THE**  
**EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**  
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA  
16 OCTOBER 2017

Your Excellency, **Mr. Mamadi Toure**, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Guinea,  
Chairperson of the Executive Council,

Honourable Ministers,

Deputy Chairperson of the Commission,

Commissioners,

Ambassadors, Permanent Representatives to the African Union,

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I am honoured to address you on the occasion of this very important Extraordinary Session of the Executive Council, devoted to the preparation of 5<sup>th</sup> African Union – European Union Summit. On behalf of the entire Commission, I wish to express my sincere gratitude for the commitment and diligence that you have continuously shown in the implementation of Agenda 2063.

The Summit, which is based on investment in youth, is being held at a crucial moment in the history of the African Union-European Union partnership and has a two-pronged significance for us. On the one hand, it reflects our theme of the year and takes into account the problems of a large part of the population of our continent that is youths who represent more than 60% of the population. On the other hand, the African Union has ambitions for major reforms to translate into deeds the vision contained in its Agenda 2063, the Africa we want. This inevitably involves a structural reorganisation of our organisation, a rationalisation of our methods and a redefinition of our partnership with the rest of the world.

In this regard, Ladies and Gentlemen, you will recall that last May in Strasbourg, I had the honour of addressing the European Parliament and strongly recalled the need for a renewal of this partnership. "A partnership that must be based on sound principles and outline all the fields commensurate with its multidimensional scope, its ambitions and the constantly expanding stakes. Respect, equality, freedom and solidarity must be the unalterable benchmarks of a strong, lasting and mutually beneficial relationship".

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

On the basis of this observation, the present session should consider with all proper rigour all the documents relating to the Summit and decide on concrete measures that will contribute to its success.

The issue of youths, taken as a whole, is well entrenched in our Agenda 2063. The report presented at the last summit by the Leader of the theme of the year, " Harnessing the demographic dividend by investing in youth", His Excellency Mr Idriss Déby Itno, clearly defined the areas on which the emphasis must be laid so as to get our youths out of the multiple solicitations, often fatal, the ones more than others, such as migration, trafficking of all sorts, extremism, terrorism.

It is true our continent has a strong population growth and has a young population. It is certainly an asset, but it is accompanied by enormous challenges to be taken up: employment, peace, security, development.

I would like, therefore, to express my full support for the general consensus within the African side to limit our engagements to a reduced number of priority areas:

- Education, training and skills development;
- Governance, peace and security;
- Resilience and mobilisation of investments.

This approach marks a clear shift from what we have done in the past, where we focused on too many projects and executed very few. In this exercise, we need to identify a limited number of priority projects, which will be all the easier for us as we have our continental platforms such as PIDA, AIDA, CFTA, CAADP, APSA and many others.

Our deliberations should, therefore, focus on concrete and executable projects with clear funding structures and strong monitoring and evaluation tools to better manage projects and results that will stimulate new initiatives in the implementation of Agenda 2063. This also affords us the opportunity to harmonise the African position before engaging the European side and, more generally, to perfectly master our strategic partnerships on the basis of the principles I have outlined above.

I firmly believe that this Extraordinary session of the Executive Council will make a major contribution to ensure the success of the November Summit. As I said earlier on, the spirit of cooperation between Africa and Europe has existed for a long time. We must acknowledge that the EU is an important partner in our efforts to achieve sustainable development and the integration of Africa. It is, therefore, urgent that a common position be worked out before the Summit and I strongly encourage our Member States and the Commission to maintain this high level of coordination hitherto observed.

### **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Within the framework of this process, several consultative meetings have been held between various stakeholders (RECs, NEPAD, AfDB, ACBF and ECA). The deliberations laid the foundation for a more strategic approach to our partnerships and agreed on success elements and factors for the joint and continental management of partnerships.

The Subcommittee on Multilateral Cooperation had the opportunity to consider all the documents submitted to your attention at its meeting on Monday, 2 October 2017. Subsequently, we had numerous meetings with the PRC and sustained consultations with the European side. These meetings and consultations culminated in the successful organisation of the Joint PRC/AUC Retreat, in accordance with the instructions of the July 2017 Summit.

In this context, our Retreat with the PRC made it possible to consider and enrich the draft Declaration which is political and strategic in a mutually advantageous vision for both Continents. We also reviewed a number of Joint Priority Projects, by drawing inspiration from the continental platforms and flagship projects already adopted by our higher authorities. Furthermore, the Retreat made it possible to improve draft text of the African Common Position on the Post-2020 Cotonou Agreement. Together with the PRC, we are pleased to have considered all relevant issues related to the November Summit.

I seize this opportunity to once again reiterate the commitment and readiness of the whole Commission to work closely with the Executive Council, the PRC, the RECs and other organs of the Union, our partners, at all levels to promote the implementation of Agenda 2063 and to

resolutely carry out the reforms dictated by Decision 635 of our Heads of State and Government.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I remain confident that all our Member States will be fully committed to making the next AU-EU Summit a success. Beyond the need to speak with one voice, it is more imperative to come to this Summit in close ranks and to provide the means to maximize gains. On its part, the Commission will leave no stone unturned and will ensure that the Continent present itself in a united front and leave no one behind.

I am convinced that this Extraordinary session will contribute to put us on the road to a successful Summit and I wish all of you constructive deliberations.

I thank you for your kind attention.