



**Message by the Chairperson of the African Union Commission,
Moussa Faki Mahamat, on the occasion of Africa Day on the theme
“Winning the Fight against Corruption:
A Sustainable Path to Africa’s Transformation”,**

25 May 2018, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

**Fellow Africans,
My Dear Sisters and Brothers on the Motherland
and in the African Diaspora,**

It gives me great pleasure to greet you on this auspicious day, as together we commemorate the fifty-fifth anniversary of the establishment of the Organization of African Unity, now the African Union, and pay tribute to the Founding Fathers and to those who, in the dawn of the 20th century, initiated this remarkable pan-African journey.

Moved by the ideal of Pan-Africanism, all African leaders at the time gathered here in Addis Ababa, on 25 May 1963, and unanimously agreed to create the OAU to which they assigned three missions: (a) the liberation of African countries and peoples from colonial domination and racial discrimination, (b) the achievement of self-reliance and combating of underdevelopment, and (c) the advancement of African integration, unity and solidarity.

Much criticism has been levelled against the Organization of the African Unity, sometimes rightly so. But as Africans, it is also incumbent upon us to recognize that the OAU survived the enormous challenges, from both within and outside the continent, which threatened its very existence.

Yes, the OAU survived the legacy of the many divisions inherited from foreign domination and meddling, as well as the challenges arising from the Cold War. It persevered in the quest for continental unity and solidarity. And it made an outstanding contribution to the fight against colonialism and racial discrimination.

The OAU served as a platform to generations of African leaders on global affairs and, through them, it made significant contribution to the elaboration of international norms governing the world today.

Last but not the least, the OAU initiated the continental instruments that set Africa’s march towards democracy, greater accountability, faster development and deeper integration.

These are the core foundations of the African Union.

The launch of the African Union in 2002 was a testimony to the determination of our leaders to expedite the achievement of continental unity and to find home grown solutions to the challenges at hand.

It also marked an acute awareness of the need to more actively involve you, fellow Africans, in the management of the business of the African Union. The unity and integration agenda is a collective ambition. Its realization requires, therefore, the involvement of all Africans.

Since its advent, the African Union has achieved a number of milestones.

This year witnessed the launching of the Single African Air Transport Market, as well as the signing of the African Continental Free Trade Area and the Protocol on Free Movement of Persons and the African Passport.

In the area of peace, security and governance, the African Union has demonstrated undeniable pro-activeness. In different parts of the continent, African uniformed personnel are deployed to combat terrorism, restore security and help create basic conditions for sustainable peace and reconciliation. Equally sustained efforts are deployed in the areas of prevention and mediation.

Democracy and human rights are progressively taking root on the continent, despite setbacks and difficulties.

On the ground, the African Union is making a tangible contribution to the improvement of the livelihoods of the African people and the development of Member States.

We should take pride in these achievements.

But let us also remain vigilant and conscious that much still needs to be done to overcome the obstacles that could derail this hard-won progress.

Central to the work ahead is the fight against corruption in all its forms.

Corruption destroys the lives of ordinary people and undermines their trust in their leaders and public institutions.

Resources that are needed for development and the delivery of services – such as electricity, education, healthcare, sanitation and clean water – are diverted by a few, thus depriving the majority of the people from access to these critical services.

African leaders have declared the 11th of July every year as the African Anti-Corruption Day, and the year 2018 as the Year for Combating Corruption, under the theme “Winning the Fight Against Corruption: A Sustainable Path to Africa’s Transformation”. During their Summit in January of this year, they also adopted a Call to Action to fight against corruption and eradicate it.

I want to challenge all of us, leaders and Africans from all walks of life, to firmly deal with this scourge.

Let me reiterate my faith in the future of the Union and our beloved continent.

Despite the global downturn, several African countries are among the world's fastest growing economies.

The fight against climate change has been raised to new heights.

Food production and food safety, the judicious use of our natural resources and industrialization are also receiving serious attention.

Robust efforts are being made to create opportunities that the youth need to fulfil their aspirations.

Gender equality and women empowerment are also a central element of our efforts.

Measures to deal with diseases and pandemics are in place, with the establishment of relevant institutions.

Continental integration is being vigorously pursued.

So is the objective of ensuring that Africa speaks with one voice on the international stage, especially in the current context marked by increasing threats against multilateralism.

In parallel, a far-reaching institutional reform process is underway, to ensure that our Union is fit for purpose and financially autonomous.

As we celebrate Africa Day, let us, as African women and men, youth and old, in the continent and the African Diaspora, rededicate ourselves to the realization of the African Union vision of an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the international arena.

Happy celebrations to us all!