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**MESSAGE BY H.E. MOUSSA FAKI MAHAMAT  
CHAIRPERSON OF THE AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION  
ON THE OCCASION OF AFRICA DAY**

**09 SEPTEMBER 2018**

**Fellow Africans**

Happy African Union Day

On this day, 09 September, the African Union was established to drive the development of the continent for the benefit of its people. This year's commemoration, however, comes as we are engaged in the fight against corruption in Africa under the theme "Winning the Fight against Corruption: A Sustainable Path to Africa's Transformation".

Today we celebrate the Union's transformation into a continental organization that is people-centered in its focus driven by Agenda 2063. An organization that is a clear testimony to the determination of our leaders to expedite the achievement of continental unity and to find African solutions to all African problems and challenges.

The Union has made a considerable progress in many areas and we remain a continent at work. The work we still have ahead of us requires that every Member State and African citizen stand together and work towards building the Africa We Want. This year's commemoration comes as the Union celebrate many achievements as we strive towards realizing our unity and integration agenda. This year witnessed the launching of the Single African Air Transport Market, the signing of the African Continental Free Trade Area, and the adoption of the Protocol on Free Movement of Persons, Right of Residence and Right of Establishment.

The African Union is also working closely with its member states to promote democracy and good governance at the national level. Equally sustained efforts are deployed in the areas of peacekeeping and mediation. The promotion and protection of human and peoples' rights are progressively taking root on the continent, despite different obstacles and difficulties in many African countries.

The African Union worked closely with Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) to secure a peace agreement between the warring parties in South Sudan in June 2018. The agreement is aimed to achieve a permanent ceasefire and the formulation of a transitional government. The agreement has raised expectations to end the country's four-and-a-half year civil war, which has killed tens of thousands, pushed millions to the brink of famine, and created Africa's largest refugee crisis.

The African Union has deployed human rights observers to Burundi, DRC, CAR, Mali, Somalia and South Sudan: a tangible contribution to the inculcating a culture of human rights in these countries and a modest effort towards sustainable peace and security.

The African Union also deployed a number of Electoral Observation Missions to various elections in many African countries including Mali, Zimbabwe and Rwanda. The main objective of these missions is to ensuring peaceful, credible and transparent elections that will promote the culture of democracy and peace and in the process deepening good governance.

This year, the African Union declared a continental fight against corruption in all its forms. That is because corruption destroys the lives of the ordinary people and undermines their trust in their leaders and public institutions. This fight begins this year, but will continue until corruption is eradicated. That is why our African leaders have declared the 11<sup>th</sup> of July every year as the African Anti-Corruption Day. I would like to pay tribute to the sterling efforts of H.E. Muhammadu Buhari, President of Nigeria for leading our anti-corruption campaign as the Champion of the theme for 2018.

The African Union also began the implementation of Agenda 2063, the blueprint for the development of the Africa We Want. Therefore, I wish to seize this opportunity to urge all Member States to continue with the domestication of our continental agenda at the national level.

This year, the African Union is undergoing a reform process to make the organization more effective and people-centered. Here, I wish to commend the tireless efforts of H.E President Paul Kagame for accepting the responsibility of championing the reform of the African Union. The continent is looking forward to benefitting from his transformational leadership and experience.

In realising Africa's development, we must ensure that we acknowledge the various challenges that our continent is going through, including its past and present experiences. As we celebrate this day, may we reinforce our collective spirit of solidarity and collaboration that exists among all stakeholders, the African Union, Member States, and Regional Economic Communities in our endeavor to build The Africa We Want, as well articulated in Agenda 2063.

As we celebrate the African Union 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.

Once again, Happy African Union Day.

I thank you.