

**AFRICAN UNION**

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**STATEMENT OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE COMMISSION  
OF THE AFRICAN UNION ON THE OCCASION OF THE MEETING  
OF THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVES COMMITTEE ON THE  
INSTITUTIONAL REFORM, PREPARATORY TO THE  
11<sup>TH</sup> EXTRAORDINARY SESSION OF THE ASSEMBLY  
OF THE AFRICAN UNION**

**Addis Ababa, 5 and 6 November 2018**

**Madame Chairperson of the Permanent Representatives Committee,**

**Distinguished Permanent Representatives,**

**Dear Colleagues of the Commission,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

This session of the Permanent Representatives Committee marks an important stage on the way leading to the Extraordinary Summit that will bring together our leaders on 17 and 18 November 2018 in Addis Ababa, on the crucial issue of the institutional reform of our Union. In fact, it will make it possible to adequately prepare the meeting of the Executive Council of 14 November, which will precede the Summit itself.

Your deliberations will be informed by the conclusions of the Retreat of the Executive Council, held here, in Addis Ababa, in early September, as well as by the brainstorming meeting you held as a prelude to the said Retreat.

Furthermore, the Commission has submitted a Report which, taking into account the work already done, states concrete proposals on the way forward.

In short, your organ has many materials to feed into its discussions. As this is a process endorsed by the highest authority of our Union, I have no doubt that you will wholeheartedly do everything in your power to help arrive at the desired destination.

May I seize this opportunity to reiterate my appreciation to all the Permanent Representatives here present for their commitment. I commend the work that your body does on a daily basis, to advance our Continental agenda, including the institutional reform of our Union.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Since the launching of the reform process in January 2017, significant progress has been made in its implementation. I mention in particular the introduction of quotas for youths and women, the rationalisation of our working methods and the slow but steady progress towards financial autonomy.

The Nouakchott Summit, last July, marked further progress. Thus, it validated the new governance structure of the New Partnership for Africa's Development, which will become the African Union's Development Agency.

The Summit also resulted in establishing the credibility of our budget process. The decrease in the budget for the 2019 financial year, without being an end in itself, was the culmination of this process. In this context, I am pleased to note the reduction in the level of our dependence on international partners.

The results thus achieved demonstrate, if need be, the relevance of the vision that imbued our leaders when they agreed to set the institutional reform in motion.

The rationalisation of our working methods has resulted in greater efficiency in the conduct of the affairs of our Union. Progress towards financial autonomy has established the conditions for greater ownership of our policies and efforts. The ongoing improvement in the representation of youths and women in the Commission will inject greater dynamism and innovation within it.

At the same time, it must be recognised that much remains to be done.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

The decision adopted in Nouakchott to convene an Extraordinary session on the institutional reform of our Union is an expression of the strong political will of our Heads of State and Government.

Drawing lesson from past attempts at reform, our leaders want to ensure that the efforts made in the wake of the decision taken at the Addis Ababa Summit, in January 2017, do not get bogged down in endless procedural debates, that the reform take the path, alas already borrowed in the past, promises without tomorrow.

Africa simply can not afford to fall into hesitation and procrastination.

The legitimate demands of our peoples' effectiveness, their demands for results and the urgency of their needs, especially the youth, leave us no choice but to persevere in the chosen path. I take this opportunity to inform you that I have just appointed a Youth Envoy, surrounded by a Youth Advisory Council, whose members I have also appointed.

We have to go further and tighten our ranks because the international context is very difficult, characterized by the return of force in unilateralism in both political and economic spheres.

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

Several issues are on the agenda of the Extraordinary Summit: the reform of the Commission, the division of labor between the Union and the Regional Economic Communities, the strengthening of the role of the Peer Review Mechanism and the effectiveness of many of the Union's bodies, including the Peace and Security Council, as well as the streamlining of our international partnerships.

It is also expected that financial issues will be discussed in the light of ongoing processes on the scale of contributions and sanctions for non-compliance by Member States with their obligations in this area.

The report submitted to you includes detailed proposals on each of these issues. It is up to you to enrich them so that, at the end of the Summit, we can collectively take new steps in our quest for a more effective institution adapted to the goals assigned to it.

I would like, particularly with regard to the reform of the Commission, to stress the crucial importance of this issue. The Commission is supposed to be the driving force of our Union. The capacity of our Union to carry out the many tasks that have been opened up depends on its ability to fully assume its immense responsibilities.

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

In considering these different issues, it is important to keep in mind the reasons for which the reform was initiated. Basically, it is about giving us, through the Union, the human, material, financial and political means to meet the strong and legitimate expectations of our States and our peoples.

The 2063 Agenda, which serves us as a compass in this new phase of the Pan-African movement, obliges us to accelerate integration, to put an end to the poverty and underdevelopment afflicting our populations; to silence the weapons and thus put an end to the suffering of all kinds generated by the conflicts; and to ensure that Africa speaks with one voice in the international arena to better defend its interests and work towards a more just and inclusive world order.

You will agree with me that such ambitious objectives require, for their realization, a more functional and efficient Union. This is the challenge of the reform.

This is to say the heaviness of the task that awaits you in the days to come. I am sure your deliberations will live up to the stakes.

I thank you for your kind attention.