



**H.E MINATA SAMATE CESSOUMA
COMMISSIONER FOR POLITICAL AFFAIRS STATEMENT**

**ON BEHALF OF
H.E. MOUSSA FAKI MAHAMAT
CHAIRPERSON OF THE AFRICAN UNION**

**ON THE OCCASION OF THE OPENING OF THE
AFRICAN YOUTH CONGRESS AGAINST CORRUPTION**

**ABUJA, NIGERIA
9 DECEMBER 2018**

Your Excellency Muhammadu Buhari, President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and Champion of the African Union annual theme on anti-corruption;

Your Excellency Mr. Geoffrey Onyema, Minister of Foreign Affairs Federal Republic of Nigeria ;

Honorable Members of the Government Federal Republic of Nigeria;

H.E. Mr. Anastase Murekezi, Ombudsman, Representative of the African Union Chairperson, H.E. Paul Kagame, President of the Republic of Rwanda;

Hon. Begeto Miarom, Chairperson of the African Union Advisory Board on Corruption;

Youth Representatives;

Distinguished Guests; Ladies and Gentlemen.

On behalf of H.E. Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the African Union, it is my pleasure and honour to be with you all today as we conduct the Youth Congress Against Corruption, an activity of the Championing the AU Theme 2018.

I would like to express my gratitude to your Excellency, **Mr. President** and our appreciation to the Government of Nigeria for co-hosting this very important youth congress.

Excellencies;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

Corruption remains a daunting challenge to good governance, sustainable economic growth, peace and stability in Africa. As H.E. Muhammadu Buhari, the Champion for the 2018 Theme of the Year ***“Winning the fight against corruption: a sustainable path to Africa’s transformation”***

reminded us at the launch of the theme of the year, “corruption is indeed one of the greatest evils of our time.”

The commitment by our leaders to address the scourge of corruption under the theme of the year 2018, has renewed the vigor towards preventing and combating corruption on the continent and accelerating the efforts towards good governance.

Preventing and combatting corruption, is a key element in the drive by the African Union to achieve the noble goals of Agenda 2063 – The Africa We Want and the 2030 global agenda for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The report on Illicit Financial Flows (IFFs) in Africa prepared by a High-Level Panel led by former president of South Africa, H.E. Thabo Mbeki, chronicles how big multinational companies are siphoning Africa’s resources through massive corruption. This is taking place through weak transparency and accountability mechanisms that allow tax avoidance, trade misinvoicing, abusive transfer pricing, and many other ways used to deny Africa to reap its resources dividend. As a result, Africa loses on an annual basis, an average of USD50 billion through IFFs. These funds could be used to drive socio-economic development and structural transformation of this continent to address major problems of unemployment, inequality, poverty and underdevelopment.

**Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen**

Agenda 2063 recognizes that good governance is one of the necessary pre-conditions for a prosperous and peaceful Africa. Article 4(m) of the Constitutive Act of the African Union and Aspiration number three (3) of Agenda 2063 illustrate the firm commitment of African leaders to entrench a culture of the rule of law and good governance. Aspiration number three (3) of Agenda 2063 envisions an Africa that is democratically governed, respectful of human rights, rule of law, justice wherein corruption and impunity will be a thing of the past.

It is a collective exercise that must leverage the abilities, capacities and pro-activeness of all citizens of Africa: young, old, male and female.

I therefore seize this opportunity to congratulate, Your Excellency **Muhammadu Buhari** for your commitment as the AU Champion Theme of the year 2018, for putting young people at the center of the fight against corruption. Putting young people at the center of Africa's anti-corruption efforts is not just a numerical or statistical argument; It is about the soul, social norm, sustenance and attainment of the development goals of our continent.

The participation and meaningful engagement of African citizens remains a cardinal principle of the African Union. This can be illustrated by the recent appointment the AU Youth Envoy, who will echo the voices of the African youth.

This year, AUC has engaged significantly with young people across the continent on leveraging their capacities for the fight against corruption. In this regard, the AU Advisory Board on Corruption and the African Governance Architecture (AGA) Secretariat under the auspices of its AGA Youth Engagement Strategy (AGA-YES), convened a series of regional youth consultations across all the five regions of the continent and a Gender forum, as part of the wide array of strategies and approaches to empower women and youth to be part and parcel of the fight against corruption in the continent.

These bottom-up all-inclusive consultations have ensured a critical interface of the various voices from the young people, women, the academia, civil society, the media and faith-based organisations and have greatly enriched the existing strategies in preventing and combatting corruption.

Through these consultations, the AU has been exposed to various programmes and initiatives led by Africa's young people to support state-led efforts in the fight against corruption. Initiatives such as iWatch in Tunisia, Follow The Money in Nigeria, The Gambia and Kenya, Integrity Idol

in Mali, Liberia and South Africa, Zero Tolerance Wise in Zimbabwe amongst others have demonstrated the constructive role young people play in the fight against corruption.

These initiatives and their young African facilitators are clear evidences of what is possible when the youths take ownership of the fight against corruption.

It is therefore heartwarming that the Government of Nigeria and the African Union has put this continental convening together under the patronage of H.E. President Muhammadu Buhari, to bring the insights of this significant demography into the centre stage of this year's conversations on "Winning the Fight Against Corruption.

**Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen**

In order to fully realize the noble goal of Project 2018 we need to intensify our actions at various levels including national, regional, continental and international levels.

Allow me to highlight three important issues that I believe will contribute significantly to the focus of our conversations here.

First, what should African Governments do to further create the enabling space for youth in the fight against corruption.

This Congress should provide us an opportunity to hear your views on how States across the continent can enhance the role of young people in building a bulwark against corruption and impunity on our continent.

Second, in our interactions over the next two days, I will encourage all participants to share their ideas on how we to foster collaboration, cooperation and synergy across various efforts in ridding the continent of the scourge of corruption.

Third and lastly, is the institutionalization of this engagement of young people within the fight against corruption on a regular basis. One of the major outcomes of the Regional Youth Consultations we conducted was the need to establish the African Youth Community of Practice on Anti-Corruption (AYCPAC) as a framework for coordination of youth led efforts in the fight against corruption in Africa. The AYCPAC will facilitate networking, sharing of experiences and foster collaboration among youths across the continent and synchronize the fight against corruption. This Congress could further elaborate on this topic.

Let's engage discussions on these three points, which could lead us to tangible results out of this Congress and help us harness meaningfully the power of Africa's youth.

*Permettez-moi de vous adresser, **Excellence, Monsieur le Président**, nos sincères félicitations ainsi qu'au gouvernement et au peuple nigérian pour les efforts dans la lutte contre la corruption.*

On this note, allow me to wish you all fruitful deliberations in this Youth Congress.

I thank you for your kind attention.