

AFRICAN UNION

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6TH AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION (AUC) – UNITED STATES (US)

HIGH LEVEL DIALOGUE

ADDIS ABABA, 29 NOVEMBER 2018

OPENING REMARKS BY KWESI QUARTEY

DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION

**Your Excellency Ambassador Tibor P. Nagy Jr, U.S. Assistant
Secretary for African Affairs,**

Excellencies Commissioners,

Your Excellency Ambassador Mary Beth Leonard, U.S.

Permanent Representative to the African Union,

Members of the Delegation of the United States,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I bring you the warm and fraternal salutations of His Excellency Dr.
Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the Commission.

I am delighted, honoured and privileged, to welcome you all this
morning to the 6th African Union Commission - United States High
Level Dialogue. This is truly an auspicious occasion. Our order of
business today is AUC-U.S. Bilateral Cooperation. We as a
Commission appreciate the importance that the United States

accords to cooperation with Africa. This High Level Dialogue is evidence of this. We need to continue to leverage the natural synergies that exist between the United States and Africa. For us in Africa, and, indeed, the Commission, the United States is not only the one indispensable country, it is also the best example of a republic conceived with one idea: Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness. This is enshrined in the preamble of the United States Constitution as proposed by the Convention of 17 September 1787 and made effective on 4 March 1989:

“We the people of the United States in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.” Note – a more perfect union; establish justice; secure the blessings of liberty.

Africa also, through the Constitutive Act of the African Union, sets out, under Article 3 thereof, to achieve greater unity and solidarity, defend the sovereignty and territorial integrity, accelerate the political and socio-economic integration, promote peace, security and stability on the continent, and promote and protect human and peoples rights, among others.

The African Union Commission and the US Government have enjoyed an eight (8) year period of intense and valuable cooperation. This relationship is still as strong as it was in 2010. The US has worked bilaterally with our Member States for over fifty (50) years, supporting in various ways and to varying degrees, African liberation, African independence, African integration and African development. As globalization progresses with increasing rapidity, our integration process has had to become more urgent and to keep pace with the inevitable march of globalization.

Our bilateral relations continue to build upon the momentum created by the 5th High Level Dialogue held in Washington, DC, on 16 November 2017. The visit by the former U.S. Secretary of State, Rex Tillerson, to Addis Ababa on 8 March 2018, reaffirmed our mutual interest and strong commitment to our continued co-operation towards the Africa we want, as it is articulated in our Agenda 2063.

Today, as we review the hard work invested by both teams over the past year, I should take this opportunity to say a word of thanks to Ambassador Mary Beth Leonard and her formidable team for their co-operation. Under her able leadership this has been a labour of love which has strengthened our bonds of friendship. Our engagement as a Commission, since her appointment in 2016, has intensified in multifarious various ways.

The four (4) strategic priority areas we have together identified in our February 2013 MoU continue to translate into concrete results for both Africa and the United States. Our common areas of cooperation, focused on (1) peace, security and stability, (2) democracy and governance, (3) all-inclusive economic growth, (4) trade and investment, bring in their wake more challenges as well as opportunities. They also build upon other aspects of cooperation, such as energy, health, education, youth empowerment and employment.

Your Excellencies,

We do appreciate the hard work undertaken by the various technical working groups from both sides. They have both worked hard to ensure full implementation of the 2018 work plan, following

the 5th AUC-US High Level Dialogue in 2017. Some of these achievements and lessons learnt are:

1. On peace and security, we are shifting the conversation towards more multi-faceted development, realizing, as we do, that there can be no development without peace and security; and certainly no peace without development. This dialogue has proven useful in enhancing AU's capacities to better respond to conflicts, their prevention, their management and their resolution. Our endeavours in post-conflict stabilization and counter-terrorism, countering violent extremism, through capacity-building, has benefited from America's well-known generosity. We certainly appreciate the United States' support in equipping the G5 Sahel force to become more effective in tackling the security challenges facing the entire region through its \$60 million pledge. Your Excellency, Oliver Twist says thank you.

2. We were pleased to host the Joint AU-US Second Annual Counter-Terrorism and Violent Extremism week in October 2018. The aim was to strengthen African regional and continental collaboration on key thematic areas to prevent and counter-terrorism and violent extremism.

3. We are quite pleased to announce that the AU has made progress towards the financing of peace and security on the continent. The AU Peace Fund was launched on 18 November 2018, within the margins of the 11th AU Extraordinary Summit. This Summit advanced our Reforms considerably towards a more efficient and effective Union – seeking to be more fit for purpose.

The Reform process is proceeding apace with our ‘Financing the Union’ initiative leading the way. Member States have pledged to increase their contributions to finance 100 percent of the AU’s annual operating budget, 75 percent of the AU

programme costs, and 25 percent of peace-related costs. Member States funding is now nearly 40 percent of programme costs, compared to five percent in 2015.

4. The AUC launched the African Free Trade Area Agreement (AfCFTA), in March 2018. So far, 49 Member States have signed and ratified the framework agreement. This shows increased interest of AU Member States to trade and work with one another and with the world. With the continued support of the U.S. government, the AfCFTA will provide greater opportunities for investment for private sectors from both Africa and the US.

5. In 2018, we agreed to partner the United States in Information and Communication Technology to enhance our capacity in cyber security and ICT infrastructure. The AUC successfully organized the first 'African on Cybercrime' Forum from 16 to

18 October 2018 in collaboration with the US State Department. The United States truly is our indispensable partner.

6. In agriculture, we should acknowledge and thank the U.S. for over a decade of support to the Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Program (CAADP). Because of this support, African government expenditure on agriculture has nearly doubled in the same time frame. In 2017, the AU was presented with a new challenge: the outbreak of the Fall Armyworm. This is currently one of the biggest challenges to agriculture and food security in Africa. Officially, over 44 African countries on the continent are affected by it. USAID mobilized and supported multiple partners and sent experts to attend the inaugural conference of the Fall Armyworm 'Research for Development Consortium' in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, held from 29-31 October 2018.

7. Yet another major area of cooperation is youth empowerment, leadership development and entrepreneurship initiatives. This year, the AU Commission successfully recruited, trained and deployed its 9th batch of African Union - Youth Volunteer Corps (AU-YVC) comprising 208 young Africans, 56% of whom are female. In addition, the Commission held continental dialogues on Youth Entrepreneurship Promotion and a Private Sector Roundtable titled “Africa Talks Jobs” at the Commission Headquarters.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

In conclusion, we are very hopeful that the continental issues we have identified, analyzed and agreed to address jointly in the context of our strategic cooperation will continue to yield positive outcomes for the people of Africa and the United States. We are

confident that our discussions today will not only deepen our trust, but also take it to a whole new level.

To this end, I should reiterate the need to intensify our efforts in fast-tracking the implementation of activities agreed upon in identified areas of cooperation. We must also lay emphasis on using the Agenda 2063 and the MoU signed in 2013 as a foundation in the development of programmes and projects. This will make for continued progress.

Finally, allow me to stress the need for continuous regular meetings of the Technical Working Groups on the various priority areas of the MoU, on both sides, to ensure timely utilization of resources available and the removal of bottlenecks. We are reassured that more collaboration at all levels from both the US and AU Commission will safeguard the objectives for the peaceful, prosperous and integrated Africa we all want.

Your Excellency,

Relations between the United States and Africa go back a long way. One of our most prominent independence leaders, Nnamdi Azikiwe of Nigeria, encouraged his younger brother Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana to go and study in Lincoln University, his alma mater. It was there in the United States that he saw the inherent vibrancy and greatness of a continental nation, from sea to shining sea. This was where he caught the bug of Pan-Africanism - in the United States. It was therefore not surprising that at the first Conference of Heads of State and Government in Addis Ababa in 1963, Kwame Nkrumah, having been infected with the bug of Pan-Africanism, could not help but refer to his beloved America:

“When the first Congress of the United States met many years ago at Philadelphia, one of the delegates sounded the first chord of unity by declaring that they had met in a state of nature. In other words, they were in Philadelphia not as Virginians, or Pennsylvanians, but simply as Americans. This reference to

themselves as Americans was in those days a new and strange experience. May I dare to assert equally on this occasion, Your Excellencies, that we meet here today not as Ghanaians, Guineans, Egyptians, Algerians, Moroccans, Malians, Liberians, Congolese or Nigerians, but as Africans. Africans united in our resolve to remain here until we have agreed on the basic principles of a new compact of unity among ourselves which guarantees for us and our future a new arrangement of continental government.” That was in the dim and distant past, over 60 years ago, at the inaugural OAU meeting here in Addis Ababa.

What, now, is left for us today is to conclude by reiterating the need for a stronger collaboration with the US, not only through technical and financial assistance, but also through policies that will help stabilize the gains made from Africa’s integration efforts. We must together give effect to the free movement of goods and people, continent-wide strategic and economic planning, as well as co-

operation within the United Nations for fairer global governance representation. And, of course, a more general collaboration on issues of importance to both Africa and the United States.

Long live the continued cooperation between the United States of America and the United States of Africa!!

I thank you for your kind and polite attention.