I begin by thanking you, Excellencies, for the decisive support you have provided to the institutional reform process from its inception.

We have come a long way, including on the most complex elements, such as the merit-based and transparent selection of the Commission leadership.

There has also been good progress on the sustainable financing of the Union and the Peace Fund, though our program budget is still too dependent on external funding.

This momentum has helped deliver historic achievements, such as the Continental Free Trade Area. I commend Chairperson Moussa Faki and the Commission for the exemplary work over the past four years, not forgetting the indispensable support of the PRC and the Executive Council.

Unfortunately, there are some remaining items where progress has stalled, namely the reform of judicial organs, the Pan-African
Parliament, and the Commission structures. The division of labour with Regional Economic Communities is also overdue.

In fact, these are the very same items I highlighted at last year’s Summit. This delay represents a disappointing shortcoming in our working methods.

Finally, the forensic audit of the Commission has been completed and it should be acted upon without further delay. Accountability is essential for our Union’s credibility.

I ask the incoming Commission to give priority attention to these items, so that they are completed this year, without fail. Indeed, I believe that implementation of the institutional reform mandate can be completed by the next Summit.

Excellencies, I would like to take this opportunity to emphasise the importance of our domestic health financing agenda, particularly in light of the Covid-19 pandemic. Without strong national health systems in every country, our continent will remain vulnerable to pandemics.

We need to strengthen our commitment to increase domestic resource mobilisation and improve health outcomes. I also urge the strengthening of Africa CDC to allow its autonomy and effectiveness.

I therefore wish to propose two items for the Assembly’s consideration to accelerate the implementation of this mandate.
First, the presentation of the data in the annual Scorecard should be updated to rank countries according to the WHO Service Coverage Index, rather than exclusively in terms of per capita spending.

This adjustment will more accurately benchmark the efficiency of health spending across different contexts, while also tracking progress toward Universal Health Coverage.

Second, I recommend that AUDA-NEPAD be assigned the responsibility for working with partners to create regional platforms to support Member States in increasing domestic health financing.

Allow me to close with a word of appreciation for the exceptional leadership of our outgoing Chairperson, President Cyril Ramaphosa, during this uniquely challenging year.

I also congratulate our new Chairperson, President Félix Tshisekedi, and wish him every success during his tenure leading our organisation. We also stand ready to provide whatever support we can, and which will be needed.

I thank you for your kind attention.