



EXPO
2020
DUBAI
UAE



African
Union



OFFICIAL PARTICIPANT – AFRICAN UNION

AU at Expo Auc Dcp Speech
Africa Honor Day: 27 February 2022

- Honourable Reem Ebrahim Al-Hashim, Minister of State for International Cooperation and the managing director for Expo 2020
- Your Excellencies
- Our Wonderful Hosts, The Government of the United Arab Emirates and Its People
- Representation of African Union Permanent Representatives Committee (PRC)
- The Commissioner General for AU at Expo 2020 Dubai
- Members of The Diplomatic Corps
- Excellencies
- Agencies, and Development Partners
- The African People Streaming at Home
- The Diaspora
- Members of the Media
- Distinguished Guests
- Ladies and Gentlemen

In January of 2019, His Excellency Mr. Moussa Faki Chairperson of the African Union Commission undertook his official mission to the United Arab Emirates where he signed a Memorandum of Understanding for political, economic and social cooperation between the UAE and the African Union Commission. It was during this visit, that we committed to participate at this very Global Exposition. An opportunity to showcase that Africa is the future the world has been waiting for.

I am delighted to be here, to see for myself and attest to the great visionary achievements of the people of UAE and, to the way you have successfully hosted this once in lifetime experience of **Expo 2020 Dubai**.

I am also here to use this amazing platform to let the world know of the great opportunities that Africa offers. A continent of 1.3 billion plus people, who all have agreed that the '**Africa We Want**', is possible if we move together in unity.

We have displayed and demonstrated, alongside our Member States, that indeed Africa is the land of opportunity with a potential market where 60% of our population is represented by our youth, below the ages of 25.

We boast a combined Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of \$ 2.6 trillion across our 55 Member States - and the more advancements we make in the implementation of Agenda 2063, the more this will grow and the more Africa will rise.

In 2018, the African Union introduced the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) which was operationalized in January 2021, with the potential to

boost intra-African trade, representing a single market of the people of Africa, and being home to about:

- 30% of the world's mineral reserves;
- 8% of the world's natural Gas;
- 12% of the world's oil reserves;
- 40% of the world's gold, and more...

Ladies and gentlemen, we are challenging the untrue biased narrative of what Africa is like, owning our tales and showcasing our potential through the success stories we continue to see in our communities, across our well-endowed continent.

At this Expo, through our many strategic events that we have held, we have shown you all, the world, that **Africa is indeed open for business!**

As we celebrate the Africa Honor Day here at Expo, it is also important to note that this year also marks the African Union's 20th anniversary, reflecting back on two successful decades of implementing programmes that have continued to change the lives of our brothers and sisters. Changing the course of our continent, towards that of shared prosperity, peace and sustainability.

Acknowledging that there is no single continental panacea to much of the challenges we face, through the unity we display, we are certainly going to continue making change that matters, touching lives and creating tangible solutions that our people are at the heart of.

As part of the long-term vision set out in African Union's Agenda 2063, the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union has adopted common African aspirations, drawing on the potential of its populations, in particular the human capital, with a particular emphasis on women, adolescents and children. Human capital is key for development as it leads to improved lives for individuals, higher earnings and improved incomes for countries.

The people of Africa have setup the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), and are implementing the integrated high speed train network, the African passport and free movement of people, and working on the establishment of a single African air-transport market, exploring outer-space, and championing the education of our people, to close the digital divide and elevate our youth to compete with their global peers.

We are a united people whose history is far reaching and life changing, embracing our stories - the ugly and the good, the nostalgic and the awe

inspiring - enshrining it in the Great African Museum for the world to come learn about us, from us and not anywhere else.

Excellencies, the February 2020 African Union Summit held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, afforded African women and girls various platforms and opportunities to rally support and advance actions towards the implementation of commitments on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE).

Their efforts translated into the declaration of years 2020 to 2030 as the new Decade of Women's Financial and Economic Inclusion. In this declaration, African leaders recommitted to scale up actions for the progressive gender inclusion towards sustainable development at the national, regional and continental levels.

Ladies and gentlemen, to better communicate our desire to become a preferred business destination, the African Union (AU) has embarked on Institutional Reforms, in part, to meet the evolving economic, political, and social needs of the continent.

Currently, 6 of the world's 10 fastest growing economies are in Africa, and the ease of doing business in Africa is improving. We therefore continue working towards an improved business environment for our investors and partners.

Furthermore, I hope that our shared cooperation at this Expo 2020 Dubai will be the stepping stone in our AU - UAE, and Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) partnership. An instrumental catalyst in bringing to life our shared ambitions as reflected in the AUC-UAE MoU. Allowing our private and public sectors, our women and youth the platform to engage in the exchange of ideas and trade in Intellectual Property as they continue to generate economic gains from the common trading ground we have mutually unearthed.

Above all, enhanced cooperation between the African continent and the United Arab Emirates will surely take us to newer heights, provided that we continue to champion each other's interests with the best intentions at the core of every decision that we take.

Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, on this 27th day of February 2022, it feels particularly good to be an African.

Good Morning and Happy Africa Day here at Expo 2020 Dubai.

I thank you.

Dubai, 27 February 2022