



**H.E ALMON MAHLABA MAMBA, AMBASSADOR OF THE
KINGDOM OF ESWATINI TO ETHIOPIA, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE TO THE AU &
ECA AND CHAIRPERSON OF THE PRC SUB-COMMITTEE ON REFUGEES,
RETURNEES, & IDPS**

11 TH ANNUAL AFRICAN UNION HUMANITARIAN SYMPOSIUM

**THEME: “Advancing Effective and Inclusive Humanitarian Action in Africa.”
27 November 2023**

**Excellencies,
Distinguished delegations from AU Member States,
Representatives of international community and Donors,
Representatives of UN agencies and international organizations
Invited guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen**

On behalf of the Permanent Representatives Sub-Committee on Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons, I welcome you all to this 11th Humanitarian Symposium graciously hosted by the Republic of Kenya which has served as our annual meeting point where we meet to discuss the continental humanitarian situation with a view to coming up with actionable outcomes that shape the Continent’s Humanitarian Agenda.

I would like to first of all acknowledge the efforts that you have all put into the processes leading up to this year’s African Union Humanitarian Symposium. For several years now, the Symposium has played an irreplaceable role in bringing together a wide range of participants to deliberate on and develop common approaches on tackling humanitarian challenges. Against the backdrop of the Humanitarian Situation on the continent that is increasingly becoming complex with new emerging trends, the symposium will provide the opportunity for constructive dialogue between the AU and its Humanitarian Partners as well as key stakeholders including affected populations, on how it can better deliver and support humanitarian action on the continent. This discussion is even more relevant today, against a backdrop of the recent adoption of the Statute of the African Humanitarian Agency at the 36th Ordinary Session of Assembly of Heads of States and Governments on 19 February 2023, and the ongoing processes to operationalize the Agency.

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The year 2023 has been fraught with both global and continental humanitarian challenges, with Africa continuing to bear a disproportionate burden of having the highest number of forcibly displaced persons on the globe. These challenges are driven by multiple crises as a result of ongoing conflicts, disasters such as drought and the devastating effects of climate change, leaving in its wake millions in need. Despite these challenges it is heartening to see that countries continue to play an active role, in the first place putting in place measures to prevent displacement, and in the event they do occur, for the timely response by offering Protection and Assistance to those affected. Member States have also continued showing great solidarity with their displaced brothers and sister who re forcibly displaced into neighboring countries, by keeping their borders open.

Our Sub-Committee appreciates the extraordinary work undertaken by the Governments and Partners and I take this opportunity to pay special tribute to this demonstration of the pan African spirit of Ubuntu. Also wish to laud the role played by the African Union Commission, particularly the Department of Humanitarian Affairs in organizing this important Symposium. I seize this moment to congratulate my dear sister H.E Minata Samate Cessouma, Commissioner for Health, Humanitarian Affairs & Social Development (HHS) for her leadership and role in championing the cause of refugees, returnees and IDPs.

This year's theme ***“Advancing Effective and Inclusive Humanitarian Effectiveness in Africa”*** could not be more apt, as the continent appreciates the reality of the protracted nature of most humanitarian situations playing out on the continent today. The discussions under this theme will allow us to conscientiously reflect on how to shape the Humanitarian Action in a way that resonates with the principles of African Shared values, whilst also reflecting complementarity and subsidiarity in Inclusiveness of humanitarian effectiveness on the continent. I am equally pleased to see in the agenda of our meeting that several partners are lined up to share thoughts and ideas on how we can shape Effective and Inclusive Humanitarian Action on the continent.

Allow me, dear Moderator, to conclude by reiterating the readiness of the PRC Sub-Committee on Refugees, Returnees and IDPs to fully support the work of Member States, the AUC and its partners in implementing actions aimed at strengthening Effective and inclusive Humanitarian Action in Africa.

I wish all of you successful deliberations as we continuously work towards implementing African Solutions to African Problems on Humanitarian Crises.

I thank you all for your attention.