

**Statement by His Excellency João Manuel Gonçalves Lourenço, President of the Republic of Angola and Chairperson of the African Union, on the occasion of the Handover Ceremony between the outgoing Leadership of the African Union Commission and the new Leadership of the Continental Organisation**

*Addis Ababa, 13 March 2025*

- His Excellency **Taye Atske Selassie**, President of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia;
- His Excellency **Mahmoud Ali Youssouf**, Chairperson of the African Union Commission;
- His Excellency **Moussa Faki Mahamat**, Outgoing Chairperson of the African Union Commission;
- Members of the Diplomatic Corps Accredited in Addis Ababa;
- Excellencies;
- Ladies and Gentlemen;

It is with great pleasure that I take the floor to make a few remarks at this Handover Ceremony between the Outgoing Leadership and the New Leadership of the African Union Commission, which I consider to be a very important moment in which we have just witnessed the end of a period of significant achievements for our organisation, during which the African Union, through your action and performance, has become a more robust institution, more active and more capable of addressing the challenges it faces, especially those relating to the process of necessary reforms initiated by the leadership that is ending its mandate today.

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to His Excellency **Taye Atske Selassie**, President of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, for the warm welcome he extended to me and the delegation

accompanying me upon our arrival in Addis Ababa and for having responded positively to our invitation to attend this very special ceremony for the African Union.

I would especially like to thank His Excellency **Moussa Faki Mahamat**, Outgoing Chairperson, Her Excellency **Monique Nsanzabaganwa**, Outgoing Vice Chairperson of the AU Commission, and the outstanding group of Commissioners who are also stepping down today, for the dynamic and very active way in which they have led our organisation over the last eight years, seeking to develop actions that have contributed significantly to the realisation of the Organisation's priority activities, especially in relation to the programmes aimed at building the *Africa We Want*, based on the implementation of Agenda 2063, established by our institution.

You are leaving us a great legacy and at the same time the responsibility to make the most of it, so we will count on the support and experience of each one of you, so that we can meet the expectations of all the citizens of our continent in building an industrialised, peaceful and inclusive Africa, where everyone can enjoy economic well-being, justice and freedom.

**Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

At the last Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union, held on 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> February, we were unanimous in our view that we need to take a fresh look at the main problems facing our continent, so that we can find more creative solutions to the many problems we face.

I also noted that each of the Member States of this powerful and important institution of ours is putting itself unreservedly at the

service of realising our great aspirations, which essentially consist of promoting the development of our continent, based on the construction and modernisation of the infrastructures we need to guarantee the functioning of our industries, the efficient performance of our services, the flow of our export products and intra-African trade via the African Free Continental Trade Area.

In my acceptance speech, I referred in particular to the issue of infrastructure, as I believe it should be given special attention by this Commission, which I am asking to devise a strategy aimed at mobilising Africa's international partners, who are interested in making win-win investments.

Infrastructure is one of the essential pillars of the African Union's Agenda 2063, which obliges us to mobilise as many financial resources as possible in order to achieve the goals we have set ourselves in this area and in the areas of technological innovation, food security and energy transition.

The African Union Commission, in coordination with the Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms, should work on organising a *major continental conference on infrastructure in Africa* this year, where we should try to convey to our main cooperation partners at bilateral and multilateral level the importance and advantages of investing in financing and investing in continental interconnection infrastructures, as a way of participating directly in the whole process of growth and development in Africa, one of the different ways of doing justice to Africans and people of African descent, and one of the many other means of reparations.

I consider it a priority that we seriously invest in building and improving our roads and motorways, modernising our railways, ports and airports, as well as creating electricity transmission and distribution lines so that we can take energy from areas

where there is a surplus to those that lack this fundamental commodity.

Let's work together to build a new International Financial Architecture, so that our continent is no longer seen as a secondary, marginal player, but as an active and decisive part of the global economy.

It is essential that the African Union participates in the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development in Seville, Spain, in order to achieve simpler and fairer access to the financial resources needed to realise our projects aimed at boosting Africa's socio-economic progress.

**Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Another important challenge facing the African continent has to do with issues

relating to terrorism and violent extremism, unconstitutional changes of democratically elected governments and the conflicts that still prevail on our continent.

In the various forums, conferences and summits that are being held on the continent on these issues, there is a common concern about the desire to work in a coordinated way to put an end to conflicts once and for all and to devote our energies, attention and resources to development issues.

Of course, even though there has been some encouraging progress in conflicts that seemed to have no end in sight, there are still some others that are unfortunately evolving in a worrying and reprehensible negative direction, such as the ongoing conflict in the Eastern DRC.

On this issue, we have decided not to fold our arms and to insist on finding peaceful solutions, not allowing the ongoing Balkanisation plan to materialise, with the



creation of a pariah state in the Eastern DRC, or even the attempted military overthrow of the power established in Kinshasa.

As far as Sudan is concerned, I will try to work much more closely with His Excellency President **Yoweri Museveni**, who has done a commendable job, to remove harmful external factors and engage the parties to the conflict in a constructive dialogue that will lead to a climate favourable to a ceasefire, the provision of urgent humanitarian assistance to the affected populations, and ultimately, a definitive solution to the conflict on the basis of national reconciliation and other steps that will ensure the end of the war and the establishment of a definitive peace.

In terms of peace and security in Africa, it is my conviction that we must act to find *African solutions to African problems and silence the guns* so that this issue does not continue to dominate our agendas and our debate almost forever.

In this regard, I think it would be useful to hold a *broad conference on conflicts in Africa* right here on our continent, in the country that is willing to host the initiative. The main focus should be on the issue of peace as an obligatory and undeniable good for all the peoples of our continent, as it is essential and necessary for the construction and building of the *Africa We Want*.

In this regard, I think it would be useful to hold a *large conference* right here on our continent, in whichever country is willing to host the initiative, *dedicated solely to analysing conflicts in Africa*, the main focus of which should be on the issue of peace as an obligatory and undeniable good for all the peoples of our continent.

The promoters in Africa of tensions and conflicts on our continent must be discouraged, held accountable and penalised with heavy sanctions from the organisation that will have serious consequences for them.

This issue should be considered more thoroughly by this Commission, so that the Peace and Security Council can play a fundamental role in the action it should take to prevent and resolve the conflicts that prevail on the African continent.

What is at stake is the need to create a solid Peace and Security Architecture in Africa, which is one of our continent's greatest concerns today.

We should be ashamed of the fact that institutions outside Africa, such as the European Union or the United Nations Security Council, are sometimes more rigorous, demanding and forceful in their positions than we are in dealing with the conflicts taking place on our own continent.

**Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Assemblies of Heads of State and Government are generally excessively long

and therefore not as productive as might be expected. In view of this, it is important to reflect as soon as possible on the solutions to be identified, so that our working sessions become more objective and productive.

The Heads of State and Government should only be asked to analyse and decide on fundamental issues, above all those of politics, peace, defence and security, diplomacy and economic and social development.

I therefore believe it is fundamental to think about a more agile, less bureaucratic operating model that is more likely to lead us to good resolutions and conclusions, with an agenda that can be dealt with in a reasonable timeframe.

Once again, I congratulate the new leadership of the African Union Commission, led by His Excellency **Mahmoud Ali Youssouf**, and I hope that we can work in an environment of close

collaboration, so that we can achieve significant gains for our organisation and for Africa in general.

**Thank you very much for your attention!**