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Moussa Faki Mahamat lauds Dr. Dlamini Zuma for championing continental agenda, as he takes over as AU Commission Chairperson

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia – 14 March 2017: The new Chairperson of the African Union (AU) Commission, H.E. Moussa Faki Mahamat has lauded his immediate predecessor H.E. Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, for leading the process to formulate a continental vision, and for finding lasting solutions to the issue of financing the Union, amongst other things. H.E. Moussa Faki Mahamat renewed his strong commitment to continued implementation of the continental vision Agenda 2063, as he delivered his maiden address after taking over from Dr. Dlamini Zuma as the AU Commission Chairperson.

The official handover ceremony took place at the AU Headquarters in Addis Ababa, in Ethiopia, on 14 March 2017. During the well attended solemn ceremony, H.E. Moussa Faki Mahamat outlined his priorities for the tenure of the four years.

His top priorities included: the need to implement structural reforms, informed by Summit decisions and President Kagame's reform report, to efficiently and effectively implement the continental vision and deliver the aspirations of the people; to silence the guns by 2020; to place the women and youth at the centre of Africa's development agenda; to focus on intra-African trade, including accelerating free movement of goods, people and services within the continent; as well as to strengthen Africa's voice in the global arena.

The new Chairperson also committed to applying zero-tolerance towards any act that would tarnish the reputation of the Union, or erode its public confidence. He is determined to promote a culture of excellence and meritocracy.

Credited with crafting Agenda 2063, his predecessor Dr. Dlamini Zuma, echoed the words of Nkwame Nkrumah that Africa now needs the courage to work hard, with determination and focus, to deliver on the aspirations of Africans. She also said that Africa must be put first at all times, and to uphold its unity and solidarity.

The handover ceremony was presided by the President of Guinea, current Chairperson of the Union, H.E. Prof. Alpha Conde. It was also attended by the President of Ethiopia, Dr. Mulatu Teshome, President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda, the Prime Ministers of Swaziland and Algeria, H.E. Barnabas Sibusiso Dlamini and H.E. Abdelmalek Sellal, as well as the Foreign Affairs Ministers of Chad and Rwanda. Members of the Diplomatic Corps, Staff of the AU Commission and partners also attended the ceremony.

Prior to the official handover, a two-day joint retreat between the outgoing and incoming Commissions took place on 10-11 March 2017 to ensure a smooth transition between the Commissions.

The incoming Commission was elected by Heads of States and Governments during the 28th AU Summit on 30 January 2017, following inconclusive election results at the July 2016 Kigali Summit. The five candidates participated, for the first time, in a public debate, dubbed “MjadalaAfrika”, a platformed that enhanced public engagement and interaction, on 9 December 2016.