

## Directorate of Information and Communication

Press Release N° 055/2017

The Commemoration of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Anniversary of the Rwanda Genocide

**Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 07 April 2017:** The African Union Commission's Department of Political Affairs in close collaboration with the Embassy of the Republic of Rwanda in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, commemorated today the 23<sup>rd</sup> Anniversary of the Rwanda Genocide under the theme ***"Remember the Rwanda Genocide-Fight Genocide Ideology-Build on our Progress"***.

The commemoration of the Rwanda Genocide is annually organised by the African Union Commission following the decision of the African Union Policy Organs to recognise the 7<sup>th</sup> of April as a day of remembrance of the victims of the genocide and reaffirmation of Africa's resolve to prevent and fight genocide on the Continent. The decision was recommended by the African Union Permanent Representatives Committee (PRC) during its special session on the Commemoration of the 10<sup>th</sup>

Anniversary of the Genocide in Rwanda, and later was adopted by the AU Policy Organs.

H.E. Amb. Thomas Kwasi Quartey, Deputy Chairperson of the African Union Commission (AUC) addressed the event on behalf of the AUC Chairperson, H.E. Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat. He stated that as Africans remember the victims of the Genocide and continue to strengthen their resolve to combat the Genocide ideology, it is vital to keep in mind that the 7<sup>th</sup> of April stirs within us our appreciation for the gift of life as well as our common humanity which obliges us to renew our collective commitment to uphold the promotion and protection of human rights.

H.E. Amb. Quartey further underlined that the event is an opportunity to celebrate the remarkable resilience of the people of Rwanda as well as the extraordinary leadership of H.E. Paul Katame, President of the Republic of Rwanda. “Rwanda remains to us today a vivid example of what leadership and creativity can achieve” noted H.E. Amb. Quartey. He further commended the amazing efforts of the people of Rwanda on the road to reconciliation, creativity, justice, social cohesion, construction management of diversity and inclusive socio-economic development. The Deputy Chairperson concluded by underscoring that “Education remains the master key to progress and concluded by urging the people of Rwanda to build on their progress”.



Professor Mekonen Haddis representing the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE), H.E. Dr. Workneh Gebeyehu in his brief remarks stated that if there is anything worse than the Rwanda Genocide, is the knowledge that it should not have happened. Prof. Haddis also made reference to efforts of the African Union to build a memorial site within the AUC premises in the memory of the victims of the Rwanda Genocide, the Ethiopian Red Terror, the Apartheid in South Africa, the Slave Trade and other war crimes in Africa. He concluded by urging the international community as well as the AU Member States to stand against such crimes and reiterated Ethiopia's firm commitment to work hand-in-hand with the AU Member States to promote and protect human and peoples' rights.

Addressing the participants, H.E. Amb. Hope Tumukunde Gasatura, Ambassador of the Republic of Rwanda to the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) and Permanent Representative to the AU applauded the AUC's Department of Political Affairs, schools and academic institution and distinguished participants for their continuous support and solidarity to the people of Rwanda. H.E. Amb. Gasatura reiterated that 7 April 1994, is a day that marks the darkest chapter in the history of the Republic of Rwanda, Africa and the world. *"Diversity has continued to become a source of conflict and killings instead of being a source of strength for nation building and sustainable development"* stressed H.E. Amb. Gasatura who also underlined that fighting genocide ideology remains a duty to all Africans.

The event was moderated by Amb. Salah S. Hammad, Head of AGA Secretariat of the AUC. The event featured among others the AU Anthem, National Anthem of the FDRE, National Anthem of the Republic of Rwanda performed by the AU Choir. A Flame of Remembrance lit by the AUC Deputy Chairperson, a 10 minutes documentary movie on the Rwanda genocide, a poem presented by an Ethiopian student, two musical drama, award of prizes and gifts to winning schools and a "never again" song all promoting the theme of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Rwanda Genocide Commemoration; *"Remember the Rwanda Genocide-Fight Genocide Ideology-Build on our Progress"*. A minute of silence was also observed in memory of the victims of the Rwanda Genocide.

The event was attended by Commissioners of the African Union Commission, Members of the Permanent Representatives (PRC), Members of the Diplomatic and Consular Corps, Representatives of ECA, UN Agencies, International and Regional Organizations, Religious Leaders, Distinguished Members of the Rwandan Community, Students from Addis Ababa schools and staff of the African Union Commission.

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