

**AFRICAN UNION**

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**STATEMENT OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE AFRICAN UNION  
COMMISSION, H.E.MR. MOUSSA FAKI MAHAMAT, ON THE  
OCCASION OF THE TWENTIETH EXTRAORDINARY SESSION  
OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

**ADDIS ABABA, 14 AND 15 NOVEMBER 2018**

Mr. Chairman of the Executive Council,  
Honourable Ministers,  
Distinguished Permanent Representatives of the Member States to the African Union,  
Dear Colleagues of the Commission,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The present meeting of the Executive Council marks a new stage in the process of institutional reform of our Union. It is expected to lay the foundation for the success of the first Extraordinary Summit exclusively devoted to this issue.

The meeting is taking place in a context that deserves special attention.

At the level of the Continent, several initiatives are underway to speed up the economic integration efforts and the end of the multifaceted acts of violence that continue to ravage different regions of Africa, with their litany of suffering and death. At the international level, we are facing a worrying decline of multilateralism and the principles of solidarity that must underlie our common humanity, thus exposing the weakest to all kinds of pressures and blackmail.

These developments dictate that we enhance the efficiency of our Union. On the one hand, the ambitious projects that we have set require that we increase our performance, a capacity to effectively translate our proclamations into action. On the other hand, the ferocious international competition impose on us the need to close our ranks more than ever before and to give ourselves the collective means to make our voice heard and ensure the consideration of our interests on the world arena.

This is to stress the great importance of this meeting. Its Conclusions, as will be endorsed by the Extraordinary Summit on 17 and 18 November, will have a lasting impact on the functioning of our Union.

### **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

The ongoing institutional reform is, undoubtedly, one of the most ambitious initiatives for change ever taken by our Union. It touches upon all aspects of its functioning and concerns all its organs.

Other attempts were made in the past. These, let's face it, did not live up to expectations, leaving a bitter taste of unfinished business.

It is, therefore, significant that the Heads of State and Government decided, in January 2017, in Addis Ababa, to be directly involved in this process. Obviously, the other organs of our Union have also an important role to play and I welcome their contributions.

But by taking the leadership of the reform process, our leaders clearly indicated their determination to follow up all aspects and ensure its successful conclusion. They put their credibility in the balance.

In fact, our role for all of us, you, as the Executive Council and we, as the Commission - is to contribute, as best as we can, to the success of the action initiated by the Assembly of the Union. I have no doubt that your session will be another step towards the objective to which all our efforts are geared.

The work done by the Permanent Representatives Committee, at their meeting held from 5 to 7 November 2018, will certainly facilitate your task. The PRC considered in depth many issues. This concerns the Commission, with a particular focus on streamlining the structure of its leadership and the portfolios, the method of selecting its members and measures to ensure real accountability both within the Commission and to the Member States.

It obviously behoves you to decide on the action to be taken about the suggested options. But whatever formula is chosen, it is imperative to preserve the fundamental principles that have underpinned the composition of the Commission: gender parity and equitable regional representation. Similarly, it is necessary to take into account the heavy tasks to be performed, which demand that they be properly distributed.

At the same time, I would like to welcome the recommendations made with regard to the process of transforming NEPAD into a Development Agency and the division of labour between the Continental and the Regional levels and the strengthening of the African Peer Review Mechanism.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Reform is a holistic enterprise. It cannot succeed if it is carried out in a partial manner. Its success presupposes that the objective of efficiency, priority setting and mobilisation of greater political will applies to the entire Union.

Admittedly, the implementation must be gradual, to take into account the difficulties inherent in such an exercise: methodical, to avoid falling into an unhelpful and ultimately counterproductive process and consensual, in order to win the support of all.

At the same time, it is important that the vision underpinning the reform be comprehensive, encompassing all its aspects, so that every step taken is part of an overall architecture.

In this context, it seems also as crucial that we seize the opportunity of the Extraordinary Summit to discuss issues on which the moment of decision-making has not yet come. In so doing, it provides general orientations to guide the Commission in the preparation of the studies that will be submitted to you in February 2019.

This must, particularly, be the case for the organs gradually established since 2002 to promote a Continental governance more in line with the aspirations of our peoples and likely to support the more effectively the process of integration that we have embarked upon. I am here referring to the PanAfrican Parliament, the African Court and the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, the Committee of Experts on the Rights of the African Child, the Advisory Board on Corruption as well as the Commission on International Law.

These organs make, each in its field, quality contributions to our collective work. Among other examples, I would like to point out, here, the work of the Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights and the Court, of the same appellation, in promoting the observance of human rights.

In spite these achievements, there are many challenges related to the delay in the ratification of the instruments concerned, which hinders their universalization on the Continent, the low level of implementation of the decisions adopted, which undermines the credibility of the organs concerned, the lack of human and financial resources, which impede their capacity for action.

Another issue on which we must and can make progress concerns sanctions against countries that do not pay on time their statutory financial contributions. The objective is to put a definitive end to the chronic delay in the payment of the statutory financial contributions. We must all the more move forward and this issue be dealt with separately from the Scale of Assessment, which will have to be agreed upon in February 2019.

## **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

As you are aware, at the Nouakchott Summit, it was decided that the Executive Council convene a session enlarged to other relevant Ministers to consolidate the Common Position on Post-Cotonou arrangements with the European Union. This meeting was held in Addis Ababa on 14 September.

Unfortunately the meeting was inconclusive. The main point of divergence has been the role that should be played by the African Union in the negotiation of a Compact between Africa and Europe.

The Chairman of the Executive Council and I will have the opportunity to report in detail on the proceedings of the meeting held last September. Suffice it, at this stage, for me to underscore that the expiry of the Cotonou Partnership Agreement affords us the opportunity to build a relationship that really takes into account our achievements in the areas of peace and security, governance and integration, and serve as a lever for the fulfilment of our aspirations as stipulated in Agenda 2063. I wish to state frankly that the old patterns certainly offer the comfort of familiarity, but they are no longer adapted to the exigencies of the time.

I believe that we can, on the basis of the deliberations of your Extraordinary session, find the necessary compromise between the various concerns expressed and speak with one voice on this matter in the interest of the continent.

## **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Much is expected from this meeting. Intense preparatory work has already been done, including through the Retreat that you held in early September and the meeting of the PRC at the beginning of this month.

It is important to translate into reality the expectations raised with the tangible progress on the path of Continental renewal. The Commission, as regards this ambition, will, as always, be by your side.

I thank you for your kind attention.