

**SPEECH OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE COMMISSION  
OF THE AFRICAN UNION,**

**H.E.MR. MOUSSA FAKI MAHAMAT,**

**ON THE OCCASION OF THE THIRTY SECOND ORDINARY  
SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

**ADDIS ABABA, 25 JANUARY 2018**

**Mr. Chairman of the Executive Council,  
Deputy Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union,  
Honourable Ministers, Members of the Executive Council,  
Commissioners;  
Madame Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic  
Commission for Africa,  
President of the African Development Bank,  
Representatives of the Organs of the African Union,  
Chief Executives of the Regional Economic Communities,  
Members of the PRC,  
Invited Guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

First of all, I would like to warmly welcome all the delegations and particularly the Ministers who are participating for the first time in your ordinary session and to seize this opportunity, at the dawn of this New Year, to extend to you all my best wishes.

May this year 2018 contribute to the concretisation of our vision of a United, integrated, peaceful, prosperous, proud, dignified Africa and respected in the concert of nations.

May I also reiterate our appreciation to the host country, Ethiopia and to reaffirm our sincere gratitude for the legendary hospitality it continues to accord us.

Similarly, I would like to commend the quality work carried out by the PRC in order to establish the appropriate conditions conducive to the success of the meeting of this Executive Council. This is the place and the moment to warmly congratulate its outgoing Chairperson, Ambassador Fatoumata Kaba, on her commitment,

dynamism and her constant search for unity and consensus. Madame Chairperson, please accept our gratitude!

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

At the moment when your meeting is convening, Africa has not yet finished digesting the statements of the President of the United States which have deeply shocked us with the messages of contempt, hatred, the desire to marginalise and exclude Africa.

Such statements, following others on Jerusalem and the reduction of contributions to the peacekeeping budget at the global level, lead us to think that multilateralism is facing a serious crisis. The Continent cannot remain silent about this.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

In perfect correlation with investing in youth by harnessing the demographic dividend, the theme of the year 2018 is hardly a surprise: *"Winning the fight against Corruption: a Sustainable path for a transformation of Africa"*.

The figures put forward by many credible reports of experts show that this scourge has reached alarming proportions. The same reports state clearly that the resources diverted by corruption from Africa can, if invested in development, replace the use of external assistance, which then only becomes a mere supplement to the resources and potentials of the Continent.

In relation to this problem, the report of the Mbeki Panel shows that corruption coupled with illicit financial flows, deprives Africa of about fifty billion US dollars every year. The numbers speak for themselves. All African nations are concerned in one way or another, at more or less varying degrees. Like terrorism, the fight here should be global and can only be won by our collective action. The year 2018 is set to be the year of this fight.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

The Summit that your session is preparing is called upon to make crucial decisions culminating in the institutional reform.

To resolutely reform the continental tool and fight against corruption, is to reflect coherence and logic.

After intense and constant consultations with the Troika, under the leadership of Professor Alpha Condé, President of the Republic of Guinea, Current Chairman of the Union, the Reform Implementation Unit is already at work. I will have the opportunity to present to the Assembly, a report on the activities already carried out, in addition to the main report that will be submitted by President Kagame to his colleagues, in accordance with the mission they entrusted to him at the Kigali Summit in July 2016.

You will recall that one of the fundamental reforms decided upon by our Heads of State concerns and rightly so, our financial independence, through the application of the 0.2% levy on eligible imports. It is a pleasure to note that despite the specificities raised, here and there, a very broad consensus is reached about the need to ensure this financial independence.

How can one not rejoice at the fact that all our leaders are now unanimous about the option of achieving this independence as soon as possible? It is not only a matter of rationality, efficiency and effectiveness, but also a question of dignity and decision-making sovereignty. I told the PRC a few days ago and I would like to repeat it here: without its independence, Africa is nothing at all. With its independence, it can be everything.

In this regard, I would like to congratulate the Member States that have already taken the necessary concrete measures to give effect to the decision and the initiation of the process for the payment of their contribution on this basis. I have no doubt that the other Member States which, like those I have just mentioned, have, in all awareness and responsibility, which opted to ensure the financial independence of our organisation, will join this overall irreversible dynamics.

Obviously, the Reform teams, at the level of the Cabinet of President Kagame and at the level of the Commission, have mobilised themselves and continue to do so, to constructively provide all explanations for lifting internal constitutional barriers or related to international commitments and take into account the specificities, however understandable. The shared goal is to ensure a better implementation of this component and/or any other component of the reform, so that we continue to move forward in harmony.

Furthermore, I would also like to welcome the technical work of explaining and taking ownership of the Kigali decision on the financing of the Union by the Committee of Ministers of Finance (F10), which will become F15, whose work has made it possible to iron out the difficulties and clear many ambiguities.

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

In this momentum of positive trends, I have the pleasure to bring to your attention the excellent level, never reached before, of the contributions to the Peace Fund.

Consequently, I am pleased that already, in the Financial Year 2017, we have reduced the contribution of the partners to 74% of the Programme Budget. For the 2018 budget, the share of the partners will decrease to 59%, which represents a substantive progress in the gradual implementation of Decision 577 of the Assembly, held in Johannesburg in June 2015. If the trend continues, the picture will be the financing to the tune of 100% of our operational budget, 75% of our programmes and 25% of the peace operations on the continent, by 2020.

In so doing, we are gradually positioning ourselves in a very short-term prospect, to endow ourselves with credible and predictable resources for our priorities by significantly limiting our dependence on the outside world, which today is unbearable.

Your mobilisation to achieve the indispensable goal of financial independence, of independence in short, has never wavered. I request you to continue with more commitment and resolve. I know I can count on you, on your power of influence and persuasion, on the depth of trust placed in you by our Heads of State and Government. You are their worthy representatives here, you are our best Special Envoys there!

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

During your present session, you will, in your beautiful tradition, prepare and adopt the main documents and draft decisions to be submitted to the high attention of our Heads of State and Government.

The excellent work done by the PRC, to which I pay a well-deserved tribute, will immensely facilitate your work, although difficult in many respects.

The Commission, your Commission, is naturally standing by your side permanently to support you in your deliberations and provide you with all the elements of information you need.

Three flagship projects of our Agenda for the accelerated integration of the Continent will be launched during this summit.

The Continental Free Trade Area, the free movement of persons and goods and the implementation of the Yamoussoukro Decision on the Single Market and the liberalisation of Air transport in Africa.

All these salutary strategic projects call for strong political mobilisation, expertise, talent, intelligence and motivation. Their effective realisation harnessing the demographic dividend through investment in youth, is the guarantee of a voice that counts on the international scene and of an attractive market.

With the huge volume of work announced in the heavy agenda that is submitted for your consideration, you can count on the Commission and all its appropriate technical services to help you carry out your task.

I wish you full success in your deliberations and thank you for your attention.