

**REMARKS BY THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE EXECUTIVE  
COUNCIL AT 6<sup>TH</sup> RETREAT OF THE EXECUTIVE  
COUNCIL,**

**ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA**

**12 – 13 SEPTEMBER 2018**

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- **My brothers Moussa and Workeneh;**
- **Colleagues;**

It is a tradition to keep our retreats informal and allow for free flow of ideas. That is why I prefer to address my colleagues by their first names and I encourage us to address each other in this manner.

I would like to welcome you to the 6th Retreat of the Executive Council. You will recall that at the last Summit in Nouakchott, our Heads of State and Government, decided that an Executive Council Retreat should take place to consider the Reform of the African Union Commission.

The Reform of the Commission is a central element of the overall AU reform process. Agenda 2063 is in place and provides our overall vision. Against this vision, we have developed a set of ambitious continental priorities and targets.

I think we can all agree that we need a strong and effective AU Commission to drive our continental agenda. We have a key opportunity over the next two days to do some collective thinking on how we best we can achieve this.

In the usual spirit of Executive Council retreats, I would encourage all of us not to shy away from making frank assessments or making bold and ambitious proposals and recommendations.

In reviewing the various documents that have been prepared for this Retreat, the following key points stand out:

The first, which we should reflect on deeply, is that over the years, it seems we have spared no expense in financing several studies and assessments on the Reform of the Commission. These have all generated various proposals and recommendations on what needs to be done.

On the one hand, this is a good thing because it means there is a wealth of material to draw on and we are not starting from scratch. But on the other hand, and despite this vast body of work, success seems to have eluded us and we appear to have made very limited progress in improving the overall effectiveness of the Commission.

I am pleased to see that there is a session dedicated to discussing the barriers to implementation. We will, therefore, have an opportunity to reflect on where we may have gone wrong, so we can ensure that we get it right this time.

This means generating concrete proposals on how to ensure that we implement what is finally agreed upon by the Summit in November.

Secondly, and I think this point is made in one of the papers, the reform of this Commission will not be achieved through a simple restructuring exercise. The heart of the reform of this Commission is about people, systems and processes. We must be able to attract and retain the best that Africa has to offer to deliver for this Continent.

Making sure that we have motivated staff driven by Pan-African values, and strong ethics who are delivering within an accountable and rules-based administrative framework is absolutely critical.

Alongside this, the Commission must be able to avoid duplication and overlap, manage its resources prudently, observe the highest fiduciary standards and ensure value for money while delivering results. This is

what will give Member States the confidence to meet their financial obligations regularly and on time.

We should not lose sight of these central elements of the reform of the Commission.

Finally, an issue which I know has been the subject of very constructive consultations with the Permanent Representatives Committee, is the question of the selection of our senior leadership.

I look forward to hearing the different views on this important topic and hope that the proposals we put forward will finally settle the long-identified challenge of unclear lines of authority and accountability at the senior leadership level.

### **Colleagues;**

Time is not on our side, with the ambitious continental plans we have put in place and in an increasingly uncertain multilateral context, we need to put in place a Commission that is fit for purpose and able to drive our continental agenda.

I look forward to fruitful discussions on this very important issue that the Assembly has asked us to reflect on as we take forward this institutional reform process.

I thank you.