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**Statement by the Chairperson of the African Union
Commission, HE Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma**

to the

**Opening session of the 17th Regional Coordination Mechanism
for Africa**

2 April 2016. Addis Ababa

Your Excellency, Dr. Carlos Lopes, UN Under-Secretary General and Executive Secretary of UNECA

Your Excellency, Mr. Abdalaziz, Representative of the UN Deputy Secretary General, Mr. Eliason

High Representatives, Liaison Officers and Staff of the various UN Agencies

AU Commissioners, Directors and Staff

Excellencies, Representatives of the Diplomatic Corps

Representatives of Regional Economic Communities

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen

On behalf of the African Union, a very warm welcome to this 17th Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa, held with the theme '*UN-AU Partnership for the Implementation of Agenda 2063 and Sustainable Development Goals*'. Of course we are very happy to have you in our ever growing, vibrant capital of Africa, Addis Ababa.

In the Foreword to the 2015 report on the Millennium Development Goals in Africa, we noted that one important lesson from the MDGs was that initial conditions invariably influence the pace of progress and the end result on global development agendas. Put simply, each region has to consider where it is, what it has as well as its aspirations, in order to meet obligations to its citizens and its global obligations.

There is no question that despite the fact that Africa did not reach all the MDG targets, it has made progress: on reducing poverty, in tackling disease and improving health outcomes, on improving access to education to boys and girls, and on gender equality.

A few countries on the continent are poised to move out of least developed countries status. Africa has recorded sustained growth over a decade despite the global recession, intra-African trade and investment have grown; and investment in infrastructure prioritised.

At the same time, the paradox of an Africa rich in resources (human, minerals, energy, land, forests, oceans) whilst the majority of Africans are still poor, remains the development challenge of the 21st century.

Distinguished participants

It is for these reasons that Africa adopted ***Agenda 2063, the Africa*** we want, so that we tackle our 21st century development challenge. It is for the same reason, in the lead up to the finalisation of the Sustainable Development Goals, that the continent put forward its Common African Position.

It should therefore come as no surprise that in the technical analysis of the goals of Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals, there is over 90% convergence. Agenda 2063 is our 50-year framework to transform the continent, resolve the paradox I spoke of earlier, and ensure that we do better on the global obligations set out in the SDGs.

The priorities of Agenda 2063, to recap:

- Investing in human resources, especially health and education, science, technology, engineering, maths and research;
- Growing and modernising agriculture and agro-processing, and mitigate the effects of climate change;
- Developing our infrastructure to power industry and households, to connect rural, urban areas, and countries with transport and ICT, and to provide basic services such as water, sanitation, schools and clinics;
- Industrialisation through beneficiation and adding value to our raw materials, growing intra-African trade, investments, businesses and jobs; and
- A peaceful, democratic and inclusive Africa, with developmental states that leaves no boy, girl, man or woman, young or old behind; and that empowers its women and ensure that the youth are the drivers of our development participation.

The implementation of the Agenda 2063 priorities will help us to meet the Sustainable Development Goals: of ending poverty; zero hunger; for quality education; water, sanitation, affordable energy; protecting the planet; gender equality, reducing inequalities; and ensuring prosperity for all.

Ladies and Gentlemen

The RCM in 2015 agreed on the need for joint implementation, and this 7th RCM must therefore focusses on the practicalities of this, at continental level, with the Regional Economic Communities, as well as at country level.

During the development of Agenda 2063, the national development plans of at least 33 Member states were reviewed and taken into account, and by the end of 2015, twenty five countries have started their domestication processes, with a further seven having given dates to start their domestication before the AU Summit in July 2016. In the recent joint meeting that we held with the RECs in Lusaka, we've also agreed to do more work to ensure alignment between their Master plans of the RECs and the Agenda 2063 first 10-year implementation plan.

The UN agencies, and other international partners, have many programmes critical to African development, not least on the Sustainable Development Goals.

We do know from our experiences on the final push on the MDG's, as well as on other issues such as Health, including the recent Ebola epidemic, on tackling poverty and hunger, on Peace and Security, on infrastructure development, on gender equality and youth empowerment: that no agency or partner can do it on its own, without the involvement of the governments and peoples of Africa.

We therefore welcome the recommendations on the reconfigured RCM clusters, based on the Agenda 2063 Ten Year implementation plan, on the concrete joint programmes for implementation at continental, as well as regional level with the Sub-regional mechanisms, and most importantly at country levels.

We also welcome the fact that we all agree on the need for a common monitoring and evaluation framework for Agenda 2063 and the SDGs in Africa, and that we are working together on joint indicators.

Of course monitoring will not be effective, unless we have reliable and timely data, which monitors the things that speak to African aspirations. It is for this reason that we must support the work of our Statisticians and other authorities responsible for vital statistics, including the operationalization of the Pan African Institute for Statistics, towards an African Data Revolution.

To drive forward this process, we must also use latest information technology as a tools to collect, analyse, share and disseminate data and information, building on the body of knowledge about our development.

The AU position on the next 10 year framework of the UN-AU Partnership for Africa's Integration and Development Agenda (PAIDA 2017-2027) was adopted by the AU Summit in January 2016, and should also help to strengthen capacity for the implementation of our joint obligations under Agenda 2063 and the SDGs.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

An integrated, peaceful, prosperous Africa, that is driven by its own citizens and takes its rightful place in the world, is in the interest of all humanity.

A growing and industrialised Africa, that uses its natural resources in the interest of its citizens and future generations, will contribute to a more vibrant and diverse global economy.

An Africa that provides adequate nutrition, health care, sanitation, water and energy to all it's people, will contribute to a more equitable and stable world.

African citizens who are educated, skilled, connected and engaged can make an even greater contribution to humanity, as other continents populations are aging.

The African Union Commission and the AU Member states therefore look forward to working with the UN system and agencies, to build a better Africa and a better world.

I thank you.

