

16th Session of the Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa (RCM-Africa)

***Theme: UN system Support to the AU 2015 Year of Women's Empowerment and Development
towards Africa Union Agenda 2063***

Statement

by

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Excellency, Ms. Zenebu Tadesse, Minister of Women, Children and Youth Affairs of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
Excellency Mr. Erastus Mwencha, Deputy Chairperson, African Union Commission
Dr. Anthony Mothae Maruping Commissioner for Economic Affairs, AUC
Ms. Bineta Diop, AU Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security, African Union
Mrs. Fatima Haram Acyl, Commissioner for Trade and Industry, African Union Commission
Ms. Rhoda Tumusiime, Commissioner Rural Economy and Agriculture
Mr. Haile Menkerios, Head of the United Nations Office to the African Union and Special Representative to the African Union
Mr. Maged Abdelaziz, Special Adviser on Africa to the Secretary General
Dr. Babatunde Osotimehin, Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund
Ms. Zainab Hawa Bangura Special Representative of the Secretary General on Sexual Violence in Conflict
Ms. Lakshmi Puri, Deputy Executive Director, UN Women
Dr. Matshidiso R. Moeti, Regional Director for Africa World Health Organization
Mr. Engida Getachew, Deputy Director General, UNESCO
Dr. Aisa Kirabo Kacyira, Deputy Executive Director, UN Habitat
Mr Aeneas Chapinga Chuma, Assistant Director-General, and Regional Director, International Labour Organization
Mr. Thomas Yanga Director, WFP Africa Office, Addis Ababa and Representative to the African Union & UNECA
Mr. Lebogang Motlana Director, RBA Regional Service Centre United Nations Development Programme
Ladies and Gentlemen

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you all to Addis Ababa for the 16th Session of the Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa. This session provides a timely opportunity for us to reaffirm our commitment to the African Union but also our engagement to continue to support the implementation of Agenda 2063.

I take this opportunity to express my appreciation to Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, Chairperson of the African Union Commission, for her presence at this meeting, which demonstrates the importance the Africa Union attaches to its partnership with the United Nations. I would also like to express my gratitude to Ms. Zenebu Tadesse, Minister of Women, Children and Youth Affairs of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia for gracing this occasion.

It is acknowledged that Regional Coordination Mechanisms have become important tools for cooperation and coordination of United Nations' activities at regional level. Here on the African continent, our recent efforts to support Africa's development have been through the frameworks of New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and the Ten Year Capacity Building Programme for the African Union. Throughout these years, the mechanism aimed at improving its efficiency and effectiveness with a view to strengthening the United Nations –African Union partnership. Nonetheless, we need to ensure to turn our commitments into actions leading to long term tangible results across African countries, regions and the entire continent which are aligned to the priorities of the African Union.

As such, the Common African Position and Agenda 2063 provide us with a framework to plan Africa's transformation as we recognize Africa's effort in attaining the Millennium Development Goals. Africa made progress. We are better prepared for the road ahead as we overcome socio-economic challenges confronting the continent. That is why member States are building on the Millennium Development Goals legacy in an ambitious post-2015 development agenda that will be universal in the form of Sustainable Development Goals which also take account of key issues not addressed in the Millennium Development Goals. A vital part of the process this time around are efforts to outline the means of implementation.

Financing the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda is missing link for which we are preparing for. This fact underscores the importance of the Financing for Development Conference being hosted by the Ethiopian Government and taking place here in Addis Ababa this July. The African Regional Consultations for this important international gathering took place at the beginning of this week and we are optimistic that its outcomes will provide a firm foundation to support African negotiators in the global process. We would also expect that the global outcome will reflect Africa's interests and concerns. Ladies and Gentlemen;

While commending the adoption of the Agenda 2063 at the last African Union Summit in January 2015, we must also recognize that the realization of its goals also rests on good governance, respect for human rights and the empowerment of women and girls. That is why the choice of the theme for this Session of the RCM-Africa, *"UN system Support to the AU 2015 Year of Women's Empowerment and Development towards Africa Union Agenda 2063,"* is timely and appropriate. The empowerment of women is undoubtedly a prerequisite to achieving the goals outlined in Agenda 2063 endorsed by the Heads of States and Government of the African Union.

Thirty years ago, inequality between women and men was widely apparent in different settings. There are notable improvements in the lives of women and girls around the world. In most countries, regardless of income levels, there is an improvement in access to education, improved life expectancy, access to better jobs, and acquiring legal rights & protection. The recent review of the Beijing+20, at the 59th session of the Commission on the Status of Women, also points to major gains in girls' education, women's health, affirmation of legal rights and establishment of institutional mechanisms in charge of gender equality. However, large gender gaps still remain, and more needs to be done, in areas of women's safety, access to economic opportunities, participation of women in leadership and enforcement of legal rights. Providing a sustainable solution to these issues remains a challenge to the elimination of discrimination against women.

As we recommit to tackling and overcoming these and other development challenges, it is also essential that we use the Regional Coordination Mechanism to its full potential. One of the ways, is that we must continue to improve on the functioning of the mechanism and leverage its unique advantages of collaboration, coherence and continuity. I am accordingly optimistic that the new framework of cooperation between the African Union and United Nations which you will also be discussing at this meeting will serve to further noble purposes including, but not limited to, the realignment of the Regional Coordination Mechanism-Africa clusters.

Particularly notable in this new programme proposal is its alignment to priorities already established by the African Union and its member States. This is because it is anchored not only on RCM principles mentioned earlier but also on ownership, accountability policy space, and faithfulness to existing commitments.

I take comfort in the collegiality and the positive spirit that always informs our joint deliberations, I am confident that our meeting over the next two days will advance the goals of women, youth as we push forward our transformation agenda and prepare for future generations.

I thank you for your kind attention.