

STATEMENT

BY

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**AT THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE 4TH RETREAT OF
THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL 5TH -7TH MAY 2016.**

**Your Excellency, the Chairperson of the African Union
Commission, Dr. Nkosazana-Dlamini Zuma;**

Deputy Chairperson, AU Commission

**The Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Chad
and Chair of the Executive Council;**

Hon. Ministers and Members of the Executive Council;

Commissioners of the African Union Commission;

**Members of the Permanent Representatives
Committee;**

**Representatives of the Regional Economic
Communities;**

Director General - UNON

Senior Government Officials;

Members of the Diplomatic Corps;

Invited Guests; Ladies and Gentlemen;

I am honoured to welcome you all to Nairobi for the 4th Ministerial Retreat of the Executive Council. As has been the established tradition of retreats of this nature, they provide us with a unique opportunity to discuss, at length and in

depth, important topical issues with a view to advancing the objectives of our Union.

Allow me Madam Chairperson, to take this early opportunity to express my profound gratitude and appreciation to colleagues and friends, for the solidarity and support extended to us during the period Kenyan cases were before the International Criminal Court. That experience, which we

lived through for nearly seven years, was made bearable by the concrete backing and unanimity of the African continent. This experience was demonstrative of the value of a strong common African voice and provides us with significant lessons in terms of how to shape and pursue our aspirations as a continent within the larger global arena. Africa, we must not relent the momentum in our quest for a just, equitable and accountable international justice system.

I wish to appreciate Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, and her team for the critical role in running the affairs of our Union and its Organs. Madam Chairperson your dream is gradually translating into programs and action plans. As the only Female President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf said 'If your dream does not scare you then it is not big enough'.

Let me also commend members of the Permanent Representatives Committee for the important role they play in overseeing the day-to-day business of the AU on behalf of the Assembly and Executive Council.

Colleagues, Ladies and gentlemen,

We held our 3rd Retreat of the Executive Council in Mek'ele, Ethiopia in January 2016 and discussed the paradox of a continent, rich in natural resources, but with many countries within the least developed countries category. That our natural wealth has not translated to economic growth and better quality of life for the majority of our people here in

Africa is matter of grave concern. Yet, dear Colleagues, the wealth and prosperity of the rest of the world derives from, natural resources and human capacity.

Colleagues, Ladies and gentlemen,

The African paradox is a reality that we must confront if we are to achieve the African Union Agenda 2063. We must find a way to free our resources and direct them towards

achieving our development goals. We owe it to ourselves and posterity to break vicious cycle of poverty, diseases, illiteracy and underdevelopment. The important question we must ask and answer for is: “how is it that our natural resources have created wealth for others, while we on the continent remain poor?” In answering that question we should also discuss what it is that we need to do differently.

Additionally, in Mek'ele, we had the opportunity to address other important subjects, including: receiving an update on the Agenda 2063 Flagship projects, the restructuring project of the AU Commission and the Organs of the Union; Free Movement of People and the African Passport; Tourism and Wildlife Conservation; and the Comparative study on AU Working Methods and the Streamlining of the business of the Summit. I believe the Commission has not spared any efforts

in implementing the Mek'ele outcomes and that we will receive updates of what has been done so far.

Colleagues, Ladies and gentlemen,

The Implementation of Agenda 2063 and its inter-linkages with the United Nations Agenda 2030 on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is a matter that we must constantly remain seized with.

I would like to emphasize the need to institute strong follow-up mechanisms. We have already taken that decisive first step. With our collective knowledge, wisdom and political will, we should be able to achieve what is envisaged in the Agenda 2063 Blueprint. It is therefore against this background that we request the Commission to come up with a progress report on all the projects.

It is now my singular honour and privilege, as your host, to officially welcome you to the Fourth Retreat of the Executive Council in Nairobi.

Karibu Nairobi! Karibu Kenya! I thank you.