

AFRICAN UNION

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**STATEMENT OF H.E. MR. ALPHA OUMAR KONARE,**  
**CHAIRPERSON OF THE COMMISSION OF THE AFRICAN**  
**UNION AT THE OPENING OF THE SESSION OF THE**  
**EXECUTIVE COUNCIL OF THE AFRICAN UNION**  
**ADDIS ABABA, 30 JUNE 2004**

**STATEMENT OF H.E. MR. ALPHA OUMAR KONARE, CHAIRPERSON  
OF THE COMMISSION OF THE AFRICAN UNION AT THE OPENING OF  
THE SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL OF THE AFRICAN UNION  
ADDIS ABABA, 30 JUNE 2004**

**Mr. Chairman,**

**Excellencies,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It is always a great pleasure for us to see beside us, at all our Sessions, our Borthor Kalomoh, Representative of the Secretary General of the United Nations. I want to salute him but particularly to tell him today that we are very close to the United Nations, following the tragic accident which took place in Sierra Leone and which cost the life of 25 persons, 25 persons died in the service of Africa.

**Mr. Chairman,**

**Excellencies,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

With your permission I would like to request the audience to kindly to stand up and observe one-minute silence in memory of our brothers and sisters, the victims.

**Mr. Chairman of the Executive Council,**

**Distinguished Members of the Permanent Representatives' Committee,**

**Representative of the Secretary General of the United Nations,**

**Mr. Executive Secretary of the ECA,**

**Distinguished Secretaries General of the Regional Economic Communities,**

**Ambassadors,**

**Invited Guests,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Taking the floor at the opening of this very important Session of the Executive Council, taking place after the rich Session of the PRC, I cannot fail to pay tribute to you, Mr. Chairman for all your support to the honourable Ministers for their support and to the Ambassadors for their readiness to listen to us.

As the capacities of the Commission are building up, we shall very soon be in better position to improve our working and meeting conditions, for greater efficiency, punctuality and rigour.

We should together ensure that we establish in our Organization a new culture of work devoid of bureaucracy, paralysing procedures, transparency in true culture of free exchange of views, a more confident culture worthy of African Union and its NEPAD programme.

**Mr. Chairman,**

**Excellencies,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I wish to thank our numerous partners for their will to be beside us, to listen to us and their will to support us. All our partners today will understand that we have to pay tribute to Mr. Romano Prodi, President of the Commission of the European Union, for having been the architect of a new partnership between the Commission of the European Union and the Commission of the African Union. A new partnership unfolding new relations, we hope, on a more equal footing, more fruitful between Europe and Africa. We have no doubt the future President of the European Union Commission Mr. José Manuel Barroso, to whom we wish a lot of success, will embark in the same direction.

**Mr. Chairman,**

**Excellencies,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

We owe a lot to our brothers and sisters of Ethiopia, the Ethiopian authorities for all the various facilities placed at our disposal particularly in the areas of receiving delegates, security, communication in order to ensure smooth meetings. We wish to thank them.

We also congratulate our brother, the Minister of State, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Cooperation and Francophonie of the Gabonese Republic on his election as President of the 55<sup>th</sup> Session of the UN General Assembly. This election, we are convinced, will make the voice of Africa, the voice of the African Union better heard on the international scene.

We congratulate the authorities and the people of South Africa on South Africa being chosen to host the World Cup of 2010 on behalf of Africa. This World Cup 2010 is the first in Africa. We also congratulate Egypt, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia which had also offered to host on behalf of Africa.

**Mr. Chairman,**

**Excellencies,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Present situation of our Continent is not a fertility, neither its state of poverty, the conflict situations or the health conditions. We must honour our commitment and redouble our vigilance in the face of the AIDS pandemic, malaria and the recrudescence of Poliomyelitis.

Today, we are summoned by situation in Darfur to support the efforts of the Government of The Sudan and ensure that all the measures announced by the Sudanese authorities are implemented: combating armed militia, facilitation of the activities of humanitarian organizations to reduce the risk of a humanitarian disaster and facilitation of the return of the displaced people.

We request all our partners to trust us and to support our efforts – political, material and financial efforts. As from this Friday 2 July, the meeting of Joint Commission bringing together all The Sudanese parties for political negotiations will begin in N'Djamena.

We can only express satisfaction at the greater involvement of our Organization in the management of difficulties between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda. Our Organization must continue to be involved in this conflict. We must save the transitional process in the Democratic Republic of Congo and preserve Burundi. We must continue to be beside our brother, President Gbagbo and political leaders of Cote d'Ivoire, for getting together in lasting manner in order to avoid new serious derailment in this country which is dear to this great people.

**Mr. Chairman,**

**Excellencies,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Indisputably, to ensure a lasting peace within the prospect of human security on our Continent. We must ensure the urgent implementation of our common defence and security policy and share widely the refusal to have war and establish the will for dialogue.

**Mr. Chairman,**

**Excellencies,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

The present state of poverty of our Continent and the growing marginalization detect a decisive choice: let us rely first of all on ourselves, assert our political will in concrete terms, express between us a solidarity that stands any test, exercise our strategy of our influence, build our negotiating capacities, ensure the establishment of another partnership which is equal, more interdependent, more resolved and determined to support the execution of the NEPAD project particularly the infrastructures. This is what our document on the Vision, Mission and Strategic Framework, the four year work programme which will be submitted to you during the Session, will try to respond.

These documents draw inspiration from the dynamism of the African Union, of the Regional Economic Communities, NEPAD and all the rich decisions and resolutions of the OAU but many of which have often been ignored.

These documents have been supported by many citizens of Africa during many months, citizens of civil society, the private sector to whom we wish to pay tribute here.

**Mr. Chairman,**

**Excellencies,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Africa can be seen as a risk. Africa is seen by many as a risk. But for us Africa may be a major opportunity and Africa must be a major opportunity. If we hold each other's hand, if we act as of today instead of tomorrow for tomorrow will be late. If we act within the framework of broad consensus to exercise our political leadership and prepare the agenda for Africa.

The agenda for Africa must be prepared by us, of course, with the support of our partners. The agenda for Africa must benefit from the assistance of all Africans, among the most competent and committed ones. This is why in the choice of our representatives within our Organization and in international organizations, we should take time to make the right choice to avoid internal divisions. The agenda for Africa can only be ambitious, commensurate with the great challenges facing our Continent. But we know that in its realization we have to be realistic, pragmatic and be able to foresee.

**Mr. Chairman,**

**Excellencies,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

This agenda for Africa must be your inspiration. It must be the decision of our authorities. It befalls the responsibility of our peoples. Our partners must have confidence in us, trust Africa, one Africa which neither North of the Sahara nor South of the Sahara, neither black nor white. I have said one Africa. Our partners must trust the peoples of Africa and in the Diaspora. Finally,

**Mr. Chairman,**

**Excellencies,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**AFRICA IS BACK !** We must make that a daily truth.

May God help us !