



PRESS RELEASE NO. 075 A/2003

**ALPHA OMAR KONARE ASSUMES OFFICE AS CHAIRPERSON
OF THE COMMISSION OF THE AFRICAN UNION**

The former President of the Republic of Mali, Prof. Alpha Omar Konare, today, assumed office as the Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union. He took over from Mr. Amara Essy, former Secretary General of the OAU and Interim Chairperson of the Commission, thus marking the end of the interim period.

Prof. Konare signed and received the handing over report as well as the seal of office and the flag of the African Union from Mr. Amara Essy at a ceremony attended by H.E. Joachim Alberto Chissano, President of the Republic of Mozambique and current Chairperson of the African Union, and H.E. Girma Wolde-Giorgis, the President of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, in the presence of members of the African Diplomatic Corps and staff members of the Union.

Three new commissioners were sworn-in during the ceremony, namely, Mrs. Julia Dolly Joiner from the Republic of the Gambia, responsible for political affairs; Ms. Bience Philomena Gawanas, from Namibia, for Social Affairs and Ms Rosebud Kurwijila, from Tanzania, for Rural Economy and Agriculture.

Those sworn in last July in Maputo, were the Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union, Prof. Alpha Omar Konare and the Deputy Chairperson, Mr. Patrick Mazimhaka, from Rwanda; as well as the Commissioners responsible for Peace and Security, Amb. Said Djinnit, from Algeria; Mr. Bernard Zoba, from the Republic of Congo for Infrastructure and Energy, and Ms. Elizabeth Tankeu, from Cameroon, for Trade and Industry. The portfolios for Economic Affairs and that of Human Resources, Science and Technology would be filled later.

President Chissano, paid tribute to the outgoing Interim Chairperson, Mr. Amara Essy for his contributions and urged Mr. Alpha Omar Konare to apply his rich experiences in raising the profile of the organization, particularly, in ensuring peace and security, the flow of foreign direct investments and full implementation of the decisions of the Summit and Council of the African Union.

Prof. Konare on his part, acknowledged that much work needed to be done, and solicited the support and involvement of all sectors of society and the Diaspora in achieving the desired goals of the African Union.

Addis Ababa, September 16, 2003