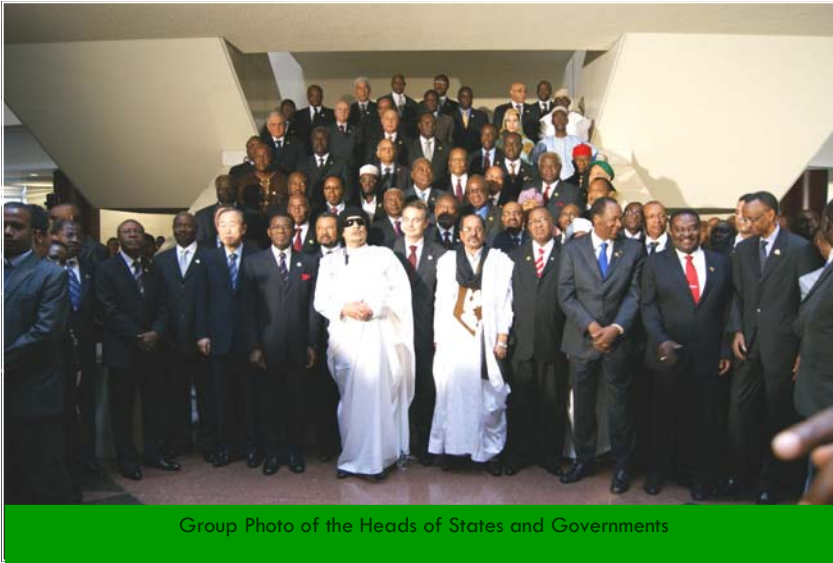




ASSEMBLY OF THE AFRICAN UNION MEETS UNDER THE THEME INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES IN AFRICA: PROSPECTS AND CHALLENGES FOR DEVELOPMENT



Group Photo of the Heads of States and Governments

The 14th Ordinary Summit of the African Union opened in Addis Ababa on 31 January 2010. The Summit's theme is "Information and Communication Technologies in Africa: Prospects and Challenges for Development".

The Assembly meeting started with a call by the outgoing AU Chairperson Brother Leader Muammar El Gaddafi, leader of the Libyan Revolution, Great Socialist People's Libyan Jamahiriya and outgoing Chairperson of the African Union, for a minute's silence in memory of the victims of the Ethiopian airlines plane that crashed off Beirut on 25 January.

Speakers at the opening ceremony included Mr. Jean Ping, Chairperson of the AU Commission; Mr. Ban Ki Moon, Secretary General of the United Nations; Mr. Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero, Prime Minister of Spain; and Brother Leader Muammar El Gaddafi respectively.

Mr. Ping was the first to make his presentation. He reminded the Heads of State and Government and other delegates of two major events taking place in Africa this year i.e. the Africa Cup of Nations 2010 soccer tournament which is taking place in Angola and the FIFA Soccer World Cup tournament to be held in South Africa in June and July. He condemned the attacks on the Togolese national soccer team in which three people killed as the team was on its way to the Africa Cup of Nations tournament. He also announced that many African countries had pledged support to the victims of the earthquake in Haiti, saying a special account for Haiti has been launched with the African Development Bank. He extended his condolences to the UN and families of those UN members who per-

ished in the disaster

Mr. Ping's account of the activities of the African Union Commission was fashioned along the four pillars of the Commission i.e. peace and security; development, integration and cooperation; shared values and institution and capacity building. He gave an overview of the successes, challenges and setbacks that characterised 2009. The Chairperson noted that the situation on the continent was mixed. There had been notable successes and also some challenges.

Among the successes in peace and security, Mr. Ping highlighted that the peace architecture is now operational. He noted the establishment of governments of national unity in Kenya and Zimbabwe during 2009. He applauded the move to democratic rule in Guinea where elections are due to take place. In Somalia, Mr. Ping noted a new dynamism towards peace. He also expressed gratitude to Burundi and Uganda for their commitment to peace by sending troops to Somalia. The Chairperson appealed to AU Member States to send more troops to support the 5500 that are now in Somalia to protect its institutions, which have not existed for the past 20 years. He applauded the resumption of relations between Chad and Sudan. The Chairperson also recalled that 2010 was declared year of Peace and Security in Africa.

Turning to the challenges, Mr. Ping expressed concern at the persistence of conflicts and return of coup d'etats, as they affect stability on the continent. The AU has adopted a firm attitude against coup d'etats, he reported. He called for vigilance in protecting the peace processes in Africa and also appealed for vigilance against human and drug trafficking, and organised crime.

Under the pillar of shared values, the Chairperson observed that legislative elections in some countries are consistent with values that have been adopted by the African Union. He went further to report on the adoption of the African Convention for Assistance and Protection of Displaced persons in December 2009, which will help protect displaced people. This is the first such instrument in the world.

Under the pillar of development, cooperation and integration, Mr. Ping highlighted that Africa has consolidated its position with the G8 and G20 and that the Commission has already started preparations for its participation in the upcoming meetings. There has also been a marked increase in interest in Af-

“LET US RISE AND TAKE OUR PLACE AND LET US ACT NOW” SAYS NEW AU CHAIRPERSON



The new AU Chairperson Dr wa Mutharika

The African Union elected its new bureau on 31 January, at its 14th Ordinary Assembly being held in Addis Ababa where the Union is based.

The bureau is as follows. President Bingu wa Mutharika of Malawi becomes the new Chairperson, taking over from Brother Leader Muammar El Gaddafi, leader of the Libyan Revolution, Great Socialist People's Libyan Jamahiriya. Other members of the bureau are: 1st Vice President: Gabon; 2nd Vice President: Uganda; 3rd Vice President: Liberia; 4th Vice President: Great Socialist People's Libyan Jamahiriya

Dr wa Mutharika started his acceptance speech by expressing his and the Malawian peoples' condolences over the tragic accident of an Ethiopian airways plane on 25 January as well as to families of victims of the earthquake in Haiti. He said he would prioritise food security during his term of office, adding that Africa should strive to achieve food security for its people and to feed its people before exporting. "I am, therefore, proposing that our agenda for Africa should focus on agriculture and food security. I propose that our slogan should be "Feeding Africa through new technologies; let us act now", the Chairperson said. To support food production he suggested investment in the construction of infrastructure.

ICT, which is the theme of the Summit, would, Mr. Mutharika said "enable our farmers to access important information on agricultural products, advanced technologies, research findings, as well as markets". Other priority areas outlined by the Chairperson include encouraging the AU to remain committed to the promotion of peace and security, democracy and good governance; encouraging member states to ratify the AU Protocol on the Rights of Women and to ensure its implementation; and fighting against the marginalization of Africa. Dr wa Mutharika urged the Assembly to begin to act on its resolutions. "Let us rise and take our place. Let us act now", he added.

(Continued from page 1)

rica among development partners and the international community.

Other notable achievements under this pillar include the Afro- Arab cooperation. Chairperson Ping announced the Afro Arab summit to be held this year in Tripoli, Libya. AUC has also taken moves to strengthen the position of Africa at the WTO and in other international forums. One of the key achievements of Africa in the last year was the fact that the continent spoke with one voice at the Copenhagen Summit, thereby making sure that its voice was heard.

Mr. Ping highlighted that concrete projects have been launched in infrastructure, energy, ICT, agriculture and education. The Inga dam in Central Africa, the Kafue Gorge in Southern Africa were given as some examples of satisfactory projects. In education, the Pan African University project is underway and this will help attain the MDGs. In agricultural development, NEPAD and the Regional Economic Communities (RECS) have moved the CAADP compact forward. He reported that 13 states have so far signed up to the compact and he called upon other member states to do the same.

The AUC has also made progress in driving the science, technology and information society; and in this regard, Mr. Ping gave the example of the telemedicine facility, which was inaugurated at the AU clinic on 28 January through collaboration with the Indian government.

Under shared values, Mr. Ping reported that architecture for good governance has been worked out for Africa. He reiterated that the AUC promotes shared values and is working in areas such as human rights, good governance, protection of refugees and displaced persons among others. The Chairperson said the AU continues to promote gender equality through the Solemn Declaration on Gender and Equality in Africa and other instruments. The policy on gender is being translated into deeds, he added. Culture is also being promoted as a major axis of action for the AUC. The 2nd pan African Congress held in 2009, was an opportunity to celebrate one of Africa's sons, Mr. Kwame Nkurumah. As regards civil society participation in Africa's development, Mr. Ping said it is being included through the work of the Economic Social and Cultural Council (ECOSSOC), an organ of the AU. Under the institution and capacity building pillar, the Chairperson reported improvements in internal governance, human resources and financial management

In his speech, the UN Secretary General Mr. Ban Ki Moon thanked Africa for its assistance to Haiti. The UNSG also announced the creation of the MDG advocacy group composed of eminent persons from all walks of life who will raise awareness and emphasize Africa's MDG priorities. He commended Africa for declaring 2010 as the year of Peace and Security in Africa and pledged the UN's full support.

The Spanish Prime Minister Mr. Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero commended the AU's search for peace, and its efforts to reduce conflict. He reiterated his country's firm commitment to peace and security and to the fight against trafficking. He said his country has greatly strengthened its cooperation with Africa and that a lot of that assistance had been channeled to education, health and agricultural development.

Delivering the Assembly's opening statement, Brother Leader Muammar El Gaddafi, leader of the Libyan Revolution, Great Socialist People's Libyan Jamahiriya and outgoing Chairperson of the African Union Africa encouraged Africa to unite and fight for its development as a single entity. Mr. Gaddafi said speaking as one will help Africa resolve many of its challenges.

A NEW FLAG FOR THE AFRICAN UNION



The African Union on 31 January 2010 unveiled its new flag at its 14th Ordinary Session of the Assembly. To the tunes of the AU anthem, the new flag was hoisted by the outgoing Chairperson of the Af-

frican Union, Brother Leader Muammar El Gaddafi, leader of the Libyan Revolution, Great Socialist People's Libyan Jamahiriya.

It will be recalled that during the 8th African Union Summit which took place in Addis Ababa on 29 and 30 January 2007, the Heads of State and Government decided to launch a competition for the selection of a new flag for the Union. They prescribed a green background for the flag symbolising hope of Africa and stars to represent Member States. Pursuant to this decision, the African Union Commission

(AUC) organized a competition for the selection of a new flag for the African Union. All African citizens were free to

compete, including those in the Diaspora and the laureate would be awarded a prize in cash. The AUC received a total of 106 entries proposed by citizens of 19 African countries and 2 from the Diaspora.

The proposals were then examined by a panel of experts put in place by the African Union Commission and selected from the five African regions for short listing according to the main directions given by the Heads of State and Government.

At the 13th Ordinary Session of the Assembly, the Heads of State and Government examined the report of the Panel and selected one among all the proposals. The flag is now part of the paraphernalia of the African Union and replaces the old one.



Brother leader Muammar El Gaddafi launching the new AU



Mr. Ping and Mr. Tharoor inaugurating the telemedicine facility

CUTTING EDGE ICT COMES TO AU WITH LAUNCH OF TELEMEDICINE FACILITY

ICT use at the AU Commission took a huge leap forward on 28th January with the inauguration of the tele medicine facility at the AU clinic at the Commission's head quarters in Addis Ababa. The launch took place under the AU- India cooperation agreement, and was presided over by Commission Chairperson Mr. Jean Ping and the Indian Minister of State for External Affairs Mr. Shashi Tharoor. AUC Deputy Chairperson Mr. Erastus Mwencha attended.

During the launching ceremony, both Mr. Ping and Mr. Tharoor held live discussions with staff in New Delhi, during which Mr. Ping not only thanked India for supporting the Commission and Africa in general but also urged it to continue to support ICT development on the African continent. The telemedicine facility is part of a larger project called the Pan African e-Network project, which aims to help Africa in capacity building by way of imparting quality education to students and to provide telemedicine services, tele-education and video conferencing and voice services among the Heads of State. India committed itself to finance the project.



Commissioner Lamamra

2010: A YEAR OF PEACE AND HOPE IN AFRICA

"2010 will be a year of many challenges. While in the past few years, the number of violent conflicts has reduced significantly, thanks to the collective determination and efforts of Africa, far too many African countries remain trapped in a vicious cycle of conflict with its attendant deadly consequences. Armed conflicts in Africa kill thousands of people every year; create humanitarian disasters; wipe out livelihoods of ordinary people; and make sustainable economic development impossible".

It is with these words that Mr. Lamamra Ramtane, African Union Commissioner for Peace and Security started the official launch of "2010, Year of Peace and Security in Africa" to the African Heads of State and Government gathered in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

During the ceremony, a flame of peace was symbolically handed over to the newly elected Chairperson of the AU, Mr. Bingu Wa Mutharika, President of the Republic of Malawi by Mr Akere Muna, Presiding Officer of the ECOSOCC. Mr. Muna urged the Assembly "to leave no stone unturned to Make Peace Happen! African people cannot expect less from you", he said. During the Year of Peace and Security in Africa, in each of the 53 Member states of the AU, a Flame of Peace will travel around the country in order to promote the initiative and to involve all African citizens. Mr. Bingu Wa Mutharika, in his statement of acceptance of the flame on behalf of the Assembly pledged to give greater visibility to ongoing and past efforts by the AU and to speed up the implementation of "commitments made by our countries to various AU instruments relating to peace and security". He also undertook to link the efforts to promote peace and security with the efforts being undertaken on the ground by ordinary communities and to mobilize resources to support peace and security efforts on the continent.

In the Tripoli Declaration on the Elimination of Conflicts in Africa and the Promotion of Sustainable Peace adopted by the Special Session of the Assembly of the Union, held on 31 August 2009, the Assembly decided to proclaim 2010 as the Year of Peace and Security in Africa.

TWENTY SECOND SUMMIT OF THE NEPAD HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE MEETS TO FINALISE ISSUES OF INTEGRATION OF NEPAD INTO AU



Dr. Mkwenzalamba, Brother leader Muamar El Gaddafi, PM. Meeles Zenawi, Chairperson Jean Ping, Dr. Ibrahim Mayaki at the NEPAD HSGIC Summit

The 22nd Summit of the NEPAD Heads of State and Government Implementation Committee (HSGIC) took place on 30 January 2010, at the Headquarters of the African Union in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, within the framework of the 14th Ordinary Session of the African Union Summit. Mr. Meles Zenawi, Prime Minister of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and Chairperson of the HSGIC, chaired the meeting.

Attending the Summit were: the outgoing Chairperson of the African Union, Brother Leader Muammer Gaddafi, Leader of the Revolution of the Great Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya; the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Mr. Jean Ping; the Presidents of the Republic of Algeria, Mr. Abdelaziz Bouteflika; the Republic of South Africa, Mr. Jacob Zuma; the Republic of Senegal, Mr. Abdoulaye Wade; the Republic of Malawi, Mr. Bingu wa Mutharika; the Republic of Namibia, Mr. Hifikepunye Pohamba; the Lesotho Prime Minister, Mr. Bethuel Pakalitha Mosisili, as well as Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the NEPAD HSGIC Member States, representing their heads of states.

Addressing the NEPAD – HSGIC, Prime Minister Zenawi pointed out that this should be the last Summit to settle any pending issues in order to integrate NEPAD. PM Meles highlighted some of the achievements in the process of integrating NEPAD, including the creation of a NEPAD Coordination Unit in the office of the AUC Chairperson which will serve as interlocutor between the NEPAD Secretariat and the AU Commission. This Unit has already commenced the staff recruitment. It will assume the responsibilities of the current NEPAD Coordinating Unit in the Department of Economic Affairs of the AUC.

Speaking later, Mr. Jean Ping, Chairperson of the AU Commission, recalled that both the AUC and NEPAD have been working together following the conclusions of the 21st NEPAD HSGIC so as to ensure a smooth integration process of the NEPAD into the AU structures. Concerning programme harmonization, Chairperson Ping said, the AUC and NEPAD Secretariat held their first programme harmonization session on 3rd November 2009. A report analyzing and proposing areas of joint collaboration has been prepared as well as harmonization of future partnership support. He reiterated the AUC's commitment to ensure that the various decisions of the AU Assembly on the integration of NEPAD are fully implemented.

The Foreign Minister of Canada, future host of the G8 and G20 Summits expressed satisfaction with the existing bilateral relationship between Canada and AU Member States, saying, there is need to reinforce the cooperation ties so that Canada can fully contribute to the development of the African continent. The Heads of State further considered the activity report of the NEPAD Secretariat, presented by the Chief Executive Officer of NEPAD, Dr. Ibrahim Assane Mayaki, for the period of July 2009 to January 2010.

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MEMORABLE DAY FOR SCIENCE IN AFRICA AS WINNERS RECEIVE PRIZES

It was a memorable day for African scientists on 31 January when, for the first time, through the AU, Africa expressed its gratitude to science by awarding two African scientists with awards for excellence. AUC Chairperson Dr Jean Ping said the objective of the award is to stimulate scientific research at national, regional and continental levels. The winners were chosen from through a transparent process carried out by the African Union. Professor Jan Hidelbrand of the University of Witwatersrand in South Africa was the winner in the Basic Science and Innovation category. In the Earth and Life Sciences category, the winner was Dr Patrick George Ericsson of the University of Pretoria, South Africa. Each winner received \$100 000.00. The awards were handed over by President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf of Liberia.