

Fact sheet on the acceptance speech of South Africa chairing the African Union.

SA'S CHAIR SHIP

- President Cyril Ramaphosa accepted chair ship of the African Union (AU) on 8 February 2020 at the 33rd African Union Summit in Addis Ababa.
- South Africa takes over the chair ship of African Union from Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi.
- South Africa first chaired the African Union following its historic re-launch in South Africa in 2002 when President Thabo Mbeki became chair of the AU.
- As incoming AU Chair, we have set ourselves key priorities to enhance the progress that is already underway during the African Decade of Action.
- We would like to deepen our work together in deepening the unity of our continent and advancing inclusive economic growth and sustainable development.

AFRICAN CONTINENTAL FREE TRADE AREA

- Our collective work to ensure political and economic unity, good governance, and peace should be strengthened by supporting integration, industrialisation, economic development, trade and investment.
- In pursuit of this priority, we will host the 13th Extraordinary Summit on the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) to be held back-to-back with the Extraordinary Summit on Silencing of the Guns in May 2020.
- Working closely with President Mahamadou Issoufou of Niger in his capacity as the AU Champion on the AfCFTA, we will work for the finalisation of outstanding issues around the agreement.
- AfCFTA will enable us to work together through intra-Africa trade, reignite industrialisation and pave the way for Africa's integration into the global economy as a player of considerable scale.
- We must all ensure that the AfCFTA does not become a conduit for products with minimal African value addition to enter and penetrate our local markets under the guise of continental integration.

PEACE AND SECURITY

- South Africa will make a contribution to promote peace and security in our collective effort to Silence the Guns.
- Through the AU Peace and Security Council, the AU Commission and the collective membership, we will focus our efforts on conflict resolution across the African continent, especially those experiencing protracted conflicts.
- We will work with President Denis Sasso N'Guessou, in his capacity as the Chairperson of the AU High Level Committee on Libya to convene an intra-Libyan Conference to promote ceasefire and dialogue.
- We will continue to work the parties in South Sudan with a view to implementing the outstanding issues of the Revitalised Agreement, in order to pave the way for the formation of the Government of National Unity.

- South Africa will also host the Extra-Ordinary Summit on Silencing of the Guns in May 2020 to look at the implementation of the AU Master Roadmap, and at the same time respond to emerging circumstances on the African peace and security landscape.
- The Summit must come up with real actions we as Africans must take to end conflicts, and deal with acts of terrorism that are raging in many countries and regions such as the Sahel, the Horn of Africa and now spreading to other parts of Southern Africa as well.
- We must also deal with the actions of other countries outside our continent that are fighting proxy wars and fuelling the ongoing conflicts.
- The principle of finding African solutions for African problems must be our over-riding theme in addressing all the conflicts on our continent as we work within the frameworks of the AU and the UN.

AGENDA 2063

- The Agenda 2063 aspirations reflect Africa's desire for shared prosperity and well-being, for unity and integration, for a continent of free citizens and expanded horizons.
- This is a continent where the full potential of women and youth are realised, with freedom from fear, disease and want.
- It is envisaged that Africa will have a strong identity, culture, shared values and strong influential partner on the global stage making its contribution to peace, human progress and welfare.
- An Africa connected through a vast network of roads and railways, enabling the free movement of goods, people and services.
- An Africa whose vast tracts of land support agriculture, commerce and livelihoods.
- An Africa whose mighty rivers are harnessed to create power and bring electricity to villages, towns, cities, homes and businesses.
- We must all drive the implementation of the Presidential Infrastructure Champion Initiative, so that priority and high-impact projects act as catalysts for the AfCFTA.
- Beyond trade integration, we have trained our sights on supporting green growth on the continent, and on ensuring that the continent takes advantage of the opportunities presented by the green transition. This includes new industries in energy, materials engineering, the circular economy, sustainable agriculture and clean production.

WOMEN EMPOWERMENT INITIATIVES AND HUMAN RIGHTS

- In this, the year that we conclude the Decade of African Women, we must advance women's economic and financial inclusion, we must address the scourge of gender-based violence.
- We want to focus on ensuring that there is accountability to global gender commitments.
- The women of our continent want to play a meaningful role in developing our continent and we must not hold them back.
- We have to find more practical and sustainable ways of empowering the women of our continent: ways that go beyond the clichés and pronouncements made from podiums as we are wont to do.
- Public and private procurements offer great opportunities as they account for 30 per cent of the GDP of many countries on the continent.
- The advocacy of including women is key to the alignment of the Agenda 2063 Aspirations.

- Agenda 2063 calls for the allocation of at least 25 per cent of public procurement to be for women-owned businesses, yet women owned-businesses are given less than 1 per cent of procurement.
- It is not unreasonable to advocate for preferential public procurement legislation to advantage women-owned businesses, and for the establishment of preferential trade and customs regimes for women.
- The representation of women in decision making structures in governments, parliaments and other sectors is far too low.
- The women of our continent want and demand to occupy their rightful place in all decision making structures and they deserve 50% representation.
- The year 2020 concludes the Decade of African Women, Africa must advance women's economic and financial inclusion, we must address the scourge of gender-based violence.
- Violence against women continues to rage on our continent. In our chair ship, we will make the adoption of an AU Convention on Violence Against Women a priority, and for member states to ratify international protocols that outlaw gender discrimination.

PROMOTION OF GOOD GOVERNANCE

- We will support the good governance and democracy agenda, leveraging the excellent work of the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) that we have been asked to chair.
- We now have 40 member states that have joined the APRM and we will engage those Member States that have not ratified to do so, with a view to achieving universal accession by 2030.

THE FOURTH INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION: 4IR

- The 4th Industrial Revolution presents our continent with great opportunities.
- The uptake of digital technologies will lead to improved competitiveness and provides fresh opportunities for inclusive growth.
- Millions of our continent's young citizens are digital natives, and we must drive a skills revolution to enable Africa to take a quantum leap into the economy of the future.
- To give full effect to our attention to this important area of work, we should look to establish an Africa Artificial Intelligence (AI) Forum that also includes the diaspora.

PROMOTION OF MULTILATERALISM IN WORLD AFFAIRS

- We must continue to advance this through bolstering the AU's relationship with the United Nations (UN).
- We must focus on the reform of the UN Security Council (UNSC), advancing the 2030 UN Agenda for Sustainable Development, meeting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's), and giving effect to the 2016 UN commitments on HIV/Aids.
- Ensuring that we leave no-one behind is why the African Union must continue with its support for the struggles of people everywhere that still suffer under the yoke of oppression.
- Today we reaffirm our unwavering support and solidarity with the Palestinian people in their legitimate quest for an independent and sovereign State, as well as the right of the people of Western Sahara to self-determination.

CLIMATE CHANGE

- Our international cooperation must extend to the continental effort to address the global climate crisis.
- As Chair of the Committee of African Heads of State and Government on Climate Change (CAHOSCC) South Africa will prioritise all three Global Goals in the Paris Agreement, namely mitigation, adaptation and support.