

STATEMENT BY THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE OACPS ON THE OCCASION OF AFRICAN UNION DAY

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African Union



Brussels, 9 September 2020/OACPS: As is the case every year, today, 9 September 2020, Africa is celebrating African Union Day. On this occasion, on behalf of the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS), the Secretary-General, H. E. Mr. Georges Rebelo Pinto Chikoti, wishes to convey his most heartfelt congratulations to the African Union, its leaders, and the African people.

He underscores the fact that celebrating this day is of particular importance, as it attests to the firm commitment of African Heads of State and Government to taking the destiny of the continent in hand by promoting continental integration. It also symbolises the transition from the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) to the African Union (AU) with ambitious goals, especially as a strategic stakeholder on the international stage. The African continent will therefore be able to play a more active role in the global economy, while tackling the multifaceted social, economic, and political issues that it faces.

H.E. Mr. Georges Chikoti commends, in particular, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, H.E. Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat, for his outstanding leadership in guiding the African Union's transformation process and his many accomplishments geared towards the development of Africa. He cites the importance of the creation and launch of the African Continental Free Trade Area, which is in keeping with the Pan-African vision of the African Union's founders, and also fully in line with the Abuja Treaty of 1991, which established the African Economic Community and Agenda 2063.

Nonetheless, the Secretary-General laments the particularly difficult circumstances surrounding this year's AU Day celebrations, marked by the COVID-19 pandemic, which has had devastating social and economic consequences for the Union's Member States. However, he congratulates the AU's leaders for their rapid and coherent response, which led to the formulation of a joint continental strategy, and the creation of a working group tasked with coordinating the mobilisation of international support.

The Secretary-General also congratulates the AU and African leaders for their determination and their tangible efforts to ensure peace and stability, in order to make this year's theme a reality: "Silencing the Guns: Creating Conducive Conditions for Africa's Development."

Finally, the Secretary-General underscores that these shared challenges of the AU and the OACPS illustrate the need to further strengthen cooperation between the two organisations based on the principles of complementarity and subsidiarity. In so doing, they will become more effective and will strengthen each other, in keeping with the revised Georgetown Agreement, the constitutive act of the OACPS. Such cooperation is also in keeping with the Nairobi Nguvu Ya Pamoja Declaration, which was adopted by the ACP Heads of State and Government at the end of the 9th Summit held in December 2019. On that occasion, the highest decision-making body of the ACP Group decided to promote the strengthening of multilateralism to meet the global challenges of the 21st century, in which Africa must play a leading role.

Against this backdrop, the Secretary-General, in the hope of establishing close collaboration between these two organisations, which have 48 Member States in common, is offering the OACPS' support for all major events geared towards the sustainable development of the continent, in particular by helping to organise the 6th AU-EU Summit, which will be held in Brussels, in October 2020.

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