

36TH AFRICAN UNION SUMMIT HELD IN ETHIOPIA ON FEBRUARY 18, 2023

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THE 36TH AU SUMMIT ENCOURAGED MEMBER STATES TO DOUBLE THE SPIRIT OF PAN-AFRICANISM, SOLIDARITY, AND BROTHERHOOD BY EXPEDITING THE AFCFTA'S IMPLEMENTATION

On February 18, 2023, African Union (AU) Heads of State and Government convened in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, to begin their 36th Ordinary Session. During the formal opening ceremony, **H.E. Azali Assoumani**, President of the Union of Comoros, was voted by his companions to oversee the organization's destiny for the following year.

Key speakers during the official opening ceremony, which took place in Mandela Hall of the AU Conference Center, included **H.E. Moussa Faki Mahamat**, Chairperson of the AU Commission, **H.E. Dr. Abiy Ahmed**, Prime Minister of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and the Secretary General of the League of Arab States, **H.E. Antonio Guterres**, Secretary General of the United Nations, Prime Minister of Palestine **H.E. Mohammad Shyyeh**, the outgoing Chairperson of the Union, **H.E. Macky Sall**, President of the Republic of Senegal in the presence of the Deputy Chairperson of the AUC, **H.E. Dr. Monique Nsanzabaganwa**, AUC Commissioner and Staff, as well as invited dignitaries and partners of the AU.

In his remarks to the assembly, **H.E. Moussa Faki Mahamat** began by praising **President Macky Sall** of Senegal for his many accomplishments while serving as the Union's chair. According to him, the 36th AU Summit is taking place at a time when the global environment is characterized by unsettling uncertainties that are exacerbated by geopolitical crises and fragmented economic governance, with unanticipated implications for Africa.

"Over the past three years, global economic growth has lost momentum, and inflation is rising at higher rates. Faced with such a situation, it is imperative that our member states decide and determine decisions

in their economic and development choices. The activation of various mechanisms of internal resilience, intra-African solidarity, and rapid implementation of African financial institutions, all supported by virtuous governance, seems in my view to be the way to salvation.”

Mr. Moussa Faki went further to call on the need for pan-Africanism among the member states and avoid “the paradigm in which we see, arms folded, the house of the neighbor burned... This paradigm is a form of collective resignation of conscience that has nothing to do with our culture and even less with our civilization, both of which are based on mutual aid. The shocking example of these realities is given today by the countries confronted with terrorism, which fight, often alone in general indifference. ... Where is our Pan-Africanism? Where is our solidarity? Where is our brotherhood...?”

Because of this, the AU’s theme for 2023, operationalizing the AfCFTA, calls for a determined acceleration of the economic integration initiative.

Nonetheless, Chairman **Moussa Faki** voiced worries over the recent uptick in illegitimate political and governmental changes, which he said accentuated political instability and weakened states. He said that these have contributed to violent extremism, terrorism, intercommunal disputes, the inherent conflict in election systems, and climate change. Since the Union has completely committed itself to the settlement and mitigation of many crises, the AUC Chairman expressed satisfaction with the progress achieved in “Silencing the Guns” throughout the continent over the last ten years.

The Organization of African Unity (OAU) will celebrate its 60th anniversary this year, and the AUC Chairman also mentioned the advantages of the AU’s 20th anniversary celebration in 2022 as well as the first ten years of Agenda 2063. He exhorted the member nations to make an effort and finish the task started by “our founding fathers in the 1960s” with tenacity and enthusiasm.

H.E. Abiy Ahmed, Prime Minister of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, welcomed his peers to Addis Abeba and expressed gratitude for their assistance in finding a long-term solution to the country’s ongoing peace efforts. He emphasized the idea of an African solution to an African challenge and urged member states to stand together in times of need. According to **PM Abiy**, Ethiopia is delighted to use its exports of products to other nations to help address the continent’s famine issues. The Prime Minister stated that “Africans make up one-third of the world’s hungry population” while encouraging the Member nations that now that the COVID-19 epidemic is almost ended, Africa needs to place itself on the growth trajectory.

Prime Minister Abiy further noted that it is only natural for Africa to be recognized with at least a permanent seat in the UN General Assembly Security Council given its current prominence as a major participant on the international stage. **P.M. Abiy** underlined the necessity for a continental media house, saying that Africa must tell its own story rather than relying solely on outside media.

The Decade of Women’s Financial and Economic Inclusion, Agenda 2063, the continent’s abundance of natural resources, and its greatest asset of all — its people, representing a diverse range of cultures and languages, were highlighted by UN Secretary General, **H.E. Antonio Guterres**, who said that the African Union is taking inspiring steps to help realize the enormous potential of “this great continent, Africa, is poised for progress”

“In particular, I’m pleased to see your strong focus on job creation and the enormous potential of the African Continental Free Trade Area,” stated the UN Secretary General, saying that “this represents a truly transformative pathway to job-creation and new sources of prosperity for Africans, especially for the youth.”

“The United Nations is proud to be your partner and to work together...The ties between the African Union and the United Nations have never been stronger. But I also recognize the enormous tests that Africa — and indeed our world — is facing on virtually every front,” noted the UNSG Guterres.

President Macky Sall, the outgoing Head of the Union, spoke on behalf of his colleagues and shared some of the accomplishments he had made during his term as Chair of the African Union through the year 2022. The consequences of global warming, climate change, an unparalleled health crisis, terrorism on the continent, the continuance of old or new wars, and the rise of coups were some of the difficulties he underlined for Africa. He told the Assembly that, with the help of the Commission and the REC, among others, he had been actively involved in conflict resolution and supporting transitional policies.

According to reports, he was extremely pleased with the outcomes of the **second Dakar Conference on Agriculture and Food Security (Dakar 2)**, which was co-hosted by Senegal and the AfDB from January 25 to 27, with the theme **“Feeding Africa, Food Sovereignty, and Resilience”** and aimed at taking action for an Africa that finally provides itself with the means to feed itself and assist in feeding the rest of the world.

“It would also be appropriate to integrate into the same process the follow-up to the Joint Declaration on Food Security from the United States-Africa Summit last December. To this end, I have set up a task force led by the **former Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn**, who is already working with the Commission and the American side on the implementation of the objectives of the Declaration. In the short term, this means ensuring our countries’ access to the supply of cereal products and fertilizers under normal market conditions,” underlined **President Macky Sall** before adding that, on the other hand, with regard to economic governance and the financial world, “I am pleased to report that Africa’s accession process as a full member of the G20 is on the right track, following the steps that I carried out in this direction immediately after taking office.”

Over the course of two days, the summit looked at a number of strategic status reports, including the Report on the Institutional Reforms of the AU presented by **H.E. Paul Kagame**, President of the Republic of Rwanda, the Report on the Activities of the Peace and Security Council (PSC) and the State of Peace and Security in Africa, the Report on Global Political, Financial, and Energy Policy Governance presented by **H.E. Macky Sall**, President of the Republic of Senegal, and others.

Reports of Heads of State and Government committees of the Assembly, notably the Reports of the Forum of Heads of State and Government that participated in the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM forum) by **H.E. Julius Maada Bio**, President of the Republic of Sierra Leone and Chairperson of the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), the Report of the AUDA-NEPAD Heads of State and Government Orientation Committee, and the Report of the AU Committee of Ten (C-10) Heads of State and Government on the Reform of the UN Security Council were considered during the summit.

Reports of the Leaders on specific thematic issues such as the Annual Report of the AUC Chairperson including the Champions reports, the report on the African Union response on Covid-19 pandemic in Africa, by **H.E Matamela Cyril Ramaphosa**, President of the Republic of South Africa and AU Champion for the Covid-19 pandemic response, Report on the evaluation of the First-Ten Year Implementation Plan (STYIP) by **H.E Alassane Ouattara**, President of the Republic of Cote d’Ivoire and the report on the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) by **H.E Mahamadou Issoufou**, former President of the Republic of Niger and leader on AfCFTA, including the report of the Committee of the African Heads of State and Government on Climate Change (CAHOSCC), was discussed during the summit, before concluding on the adoption of the date and venue of the 37th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union and the date and venue of the 5th Mid-Year Coordination meeting.

Sourced from [African Union site](#)