

Closing Statement

By

H.E. Mr. Hailemariam Dessalegn

**Prime Minister of the Federal Democratic
Republic of Ethiopia and Chairperson of the
African Union**

At

**The 20th ordinary session of the Assembly of
Heads of State and Government of the
African Union**

28 January 2013

Addis Ababa

Excellencies Heads of State and Government,

Distinguished delegates,

Invited Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me once again thank you all most sincerely for the honour you have bestowed upon me to preside over the activities of our Union. I am indeed very grateful to each and every one of you for your support and cooperation, which greatly assisted me in steering our deliberations to a swift and successful conclusion.

I would also like to thank you all for your active participation in our discussions on a range of issues that are of interest and concern to our continent. Your valuable comments and contributions have no doubt enriched our debate and informed the decisions that we have adopted on a myriad of issues. Since those decisions are expected to be implemented by all of us member States, the Commission and other Organs of our Union as well as the Regional Economic Communities (RECs), I believe we should

exert every effort in carrying out our obligation with the view to advancing the objectives of our Union and making a difference in the lives of our people.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I wish to try to briefly recapitulate the intense discussions that we have had in the last two days and some of the most important decisions that we have made to achieve our objective of creating a peaceful, integrated, people-centred and prosperous Africa.

As this year marks the 50th Anniversary of the establishment of our continental organization, we have considered the progress report of the Commission on the ongoing preparations to celebrate this historic event and we encouraged the Commission to continue its work in close consultation and coordination with member States.

In accordance with the decision of the 16th ordinary session of the Assembly, the Golden Jubilee of our organization will be celebrated in Addis Ababa on 25 May 2013, by highlighting the ideals of Pan-Africanism and African Renaissance. We will

deliberate on this important issue during the Special Summit due to be held here at the Headquarters on that historic day on the basis of the Concept Note that the Commission is requested to present in consultation with member States, Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and other relevant stakeholders.

Since the Golden Jubilee should be celebrated in all of our countries, I wish to express my hope that all member States will organize a series of activities by engaging all sections of their society. This in my view will serve as a unique opportunity to popularize our Union and mobilize our people to the attainment of the ideals of Pan-Africanism and African Renaissance.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The state of peace and security in our continent is one of the issues that we have discussed extensively. While we have noted the progress made in our collective determination to prevent, manage and resolve conflicts, we remain deeply concerned with the resurgence

of conflicts in some of our member States including Mali, Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Particularly, we have expressed our deep concern about the situation in Mali and the continuing deterioration of the humanitarian situation in the northern part of the country. In this regard, we have reaffirmed our solidarity with Mali and made a firm commitment to pool our efforts together to assist this sisterly country. Therefore, we have decided to contribute funds for the African-led International Support Mission in Mali (AFISMA) to the tune of 50 million US dollar. The Pledging Conference on Mali scheduled to take place tomorrow will be a very good opportunity to mobilize the necessary resources for AFISMA and the Malian Defense and Security Forces.

We have also underscored the need to enhance our capacity to rapidly respond to the emergence of conflicts including the full operationalization of the African Standby Force as envisaged in the relevant provisions of the Constitutive Act and the Protocol relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We have also deliberated on the report of the NEPAD Heads of State and Government Orientation Committee and emphasized the importance of redoubling our efforts in implementing NEPAD priorities with a view to accelerating our transformation agenda. In this connection, we have exchanged views on ways and means of addressing our financial constraints and agreed on the need to find innovative ways of mobilizing domestic resources to finance the implementation of NEPAD programmes.

We have also reflected on the outcome of the 18th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, which took place in Doha in December last year and noted with satisfaction the achievement of the Committee of African Heads of State and Government on Climate Change (CAHOSCC) in championing Africa's common position. This notwithstanding, we have recognized the need to refine and streamline the coordination mechanism for CAHOSCC.

Moreover, we have received a briefing from the representative of the President of Liberia, who is serving as Co-Chair of the High level Panel established by the United Nations Secretary-General on the Post-2015 Global Development Agenda, about the ongoing discussion on the issue. In this regard, we have decided to set up a Committee of African Heads of State and Government under the leadership of President Sirleaf to enable Africa to speak with one voice on the global discussion to chart the Post-2015 development agenda.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

During our session, we have adopted the Statutes of the Pan-African University, which has become operational last year. We have also elected two members of the African Union Commission, five members of the Peace and Security Council, one judge of the African Court on Human and People's Rights, five members of the African Commission on International Law as well as eleven members of the Advisory Board on Corruption. I would like to once again congratulate all of them for their brilliant election.

Finally, I wish to conclude my remarks by expressing my profound appreciation to all those who have contributed their share to the success of our meeting. My special thanks goes to the staff members of the Commission including interpreters, protocol and security officers and other support staff members for their diligence and hard work in facilitating our work.

I look forward to seeing you all in Addis Ababa again for our next session in May 2013. I wish you a safe journey back home.

I thank you