



NEPAD Agency at

The 29th African Union Assembly



Statement by the NEPAD Agency CEO, Dr Ibrahim A. Mayaki

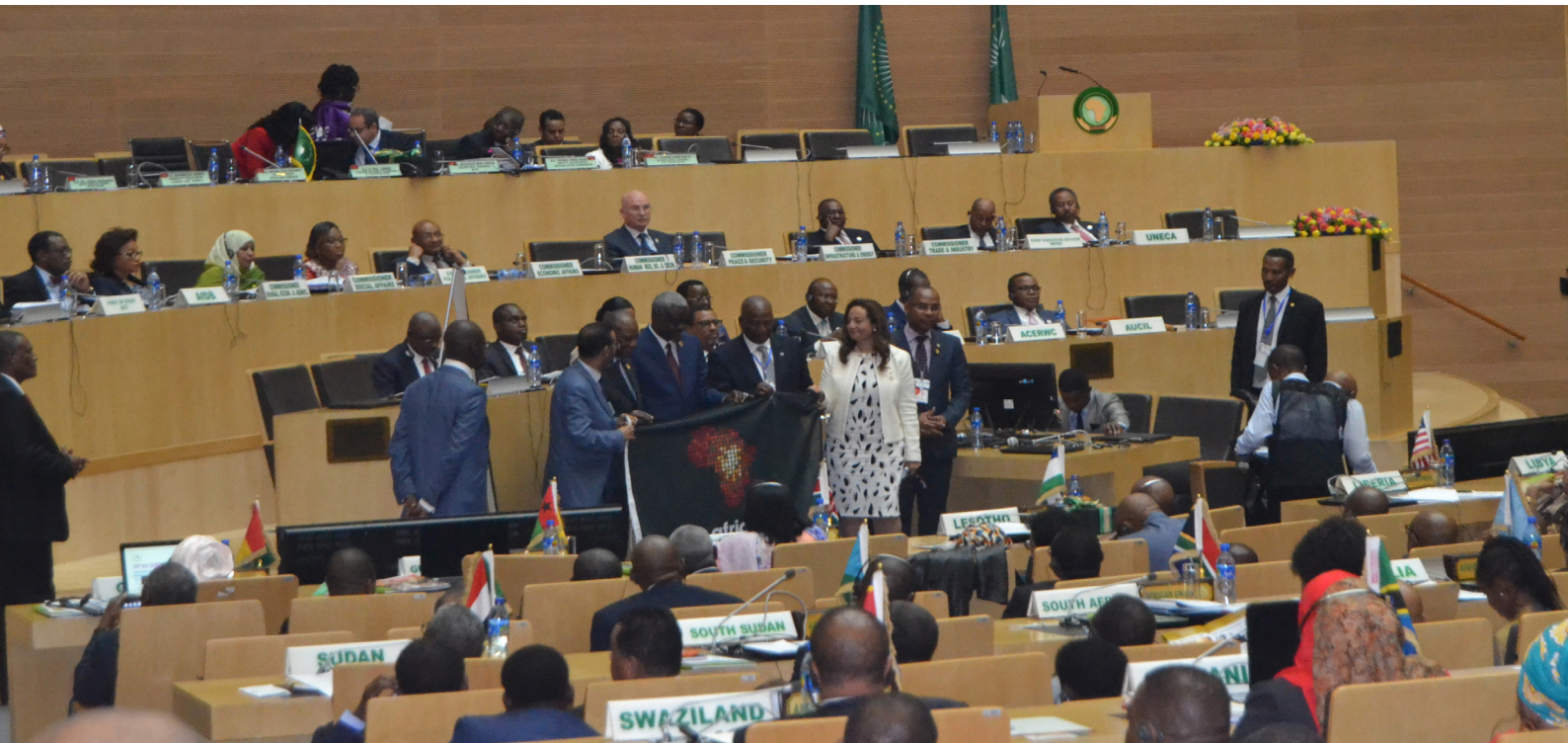
The 29th African Union Summit took place in Addis Ababa from June 27 - July 4, 2017. The Summit programme, as per tradition, commenced with the meeting of the Permanent Representatives Committee (PRC), followed by the meeting of foreign ministers as Executive Council, and culminated in the Assembly of Heads of State and Government.

Throughout the Summit period, the Chairperson of the African Union, H.E. President Alpha Condé of Guinea and the Chairperson of the African Union Commission H.E. Mr Moussa Faki Mahamat, emphasised the necessity for a new approach in governing African Union business. The institutional reform of the African Union, including a new AU financing mechanism, were at the top of the agenda for this Summit, providing momentum with the intention of giving further efficiency and credibility to our continental organisation.

I was privileged to hold a bilateral meeting during the Summit with the champion of the AU reform process, H.E. President Paul Kagame of Rwanda, where we discussed the important recommendation that the AU reform team has made, which is to transform the NEPAD Agency into the African Union Development Agency.

The Assembly included a roundtable led by H.E. President Idriss Deby Itno of Chad on the theme of the year 2017, "Harnessing the Demographic Dividend through Investments in the Youth," where the establishment of the new African Youth Fund was introduced. The Assembly also witnessed the donation of a cheque to the AU Foundation by H.E. President Robert G. Mugabe of Zimbabwe, and the launch of the "Dot Africa" roadshow to promote a top-level domain for the pan-African internet community.





The NEPAD Agency was well-represented at the 4th High Level Panel on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment held on the side-lines of the Summit, and the tradition of reporting an annual AU Gender Scorecard continued, providing recognition to African countries making particular strides in this area.

Peace and security was debated in detail, specially related to the implementation of the Master Roadmap of practical steps to silence the guns in Africa by the year 2020. Other reports were presented related to the implementation of Agenda 2063 and its First 10 year plan, including the consolidation of the Continental Free Trade Area.

The Summit witnessed the election of the Commissioner for Human Resources, Science and Technology, Prof Sarah Anyang Agbor of Cameroon, and the Commissioner for

Economic Affairs Dr Victor Harison of Madagascar, as well as the election of several new members of the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights, the Advisory Board on Corruption, and the Panel of the Wise.

The Summit also celebrated milestones by distinguished Africans, including the election of Dr Tedros Adhanom as Director General of the World Health Organisation and the delegates held a minute of silence in honour of Mr Babatunde Osotimehin, late Executive Director of the UN Population Fund.

The NEPAD delegation to the AU Summit ended the mission on a particularly high note, with a dinner hosted by our former colleague and newly-appointed Permanent Representative of Nigeria to Ethiopia and the African Union, Ambassador Bankole Adeoye.



NEPAD Agency and partners launch 2016 Global Hunger Index: Africa Report

The NEPAD Agency in collaboration with the African Union Commission, the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), Regional Strategic Analysis Knowledge Support System (ReSAKSS), Concern Worldwide and Welthungerhilfe launched the Global Hunger Index: Africa Report. The launch took place on the 2nd July 2017 on the margins of the AU Summit.

The report tracks and reports hunger levels in Africa. It builds on previous related efforts, and is calculated based on four indicators, namely undernourishment, child wasting, child stunting and child mortality.

Speaking during the launch, the NEPAD Agency CEO, Dr Ibrahim Mayaki reminded guests that the launch of the Global Hunger Index: Africa Edition report presents a ray of hope in the fight against the scourge of hunger on the continent.

“We have made progress regarding the implementation of the Malabo Declaration, but we are still far from achieving the goals. We are still facing issues of extreme hunger, and hence we need to think about strategic frameworks that allow for accelerated implementation. This will be an important lever in fostering transformation on the continent. “For 6 decades, policy makers have left implementation in the hands of experts; this has to change. Our leaders must get involved in implementation, as this is the only way that transformation can be assured,” he said.



Mrs Amira Elfadil, Department of Social Affairs Commissioner, AUC, with Dr Ibrahim Mayaki, NEPAD Agency CEO

The launch aimed to secure buy-in and commitment among policy makers and other stakeholders on the Zero Hunger campaign by promoting the generation and application of GHI data. This commitment from the various stakeholders will assist in fostering evidence-informed interventions, and boost investments in food security and nutrition on the continent. The launch of the GHI provides enhanced impetus in the pursuit towards the continental target of Zero Hunger by 2025 in Africa.

The Zero Hunger by 2025 in Africa is the target set by the African Union in Agenda 2063 and the 2014 Malabo Declaration on agricultural transformation. The GHI study puts the magnitude of the task into perspective and highlights the major levers in policy, investment, technology as well as human and institutional capacity required for addressing hunger on the continent.

This is what some of the speakers at the launch had to say:

Mrs Amira Elfadil, African Union Commission, Department of Social Affairs Commissioner: *“Africa has all the strategies and frameworks to curb hunger in the continent. The challenge however, remains the implementation of these frameworks and strategies. The challenges include lack of commitment in implementation, budgetary and financial constraints especially because of dependency on donor support. African countries must support each other. We must focus on training and capacity building.”*

Dr Namakolo Covic, IFPRI Representative: *“We are aware that while under-nutrition is reducing, we are also facing the challenge of obesity increasing. We look forward to working together with the NEPAD Agency and the AU to develop targeted*

interventions in the fight against hunger on the African continent. I challenge those in this room to work together to monitor progress in the continent, to make sure that we implement the policies and strategies that have been developed for the continent and thereby ensure that we achieve the vision as set out in Agenda 2063.”

Dr Getaw Tadesse Gebreyohanes, ReSAKSS Representative: *“It is possible to achieve what the Zero Hunger by 2025 vision proposes. This notwithstanding, we cannot overlook major issues in many countries that if not addressed will impede realisation of this vision. We will never be able to achieve zero hunger by doing business as usual. There has to be change.”*

Mrs Angeline Rudakubana, Director WFP, Africa Office: *“The report has given us clear programme with action plans for everyone of us, Let’s go back to the drawing board and look at what ways of accelerating implementation of the programmes geared at achieving zero hunger. The momentum is high and we should capitalize on this . Let’s talk about hunger in Africa, lets think about our actions, write them on paper, go out in the field and make the change happen.”*

The English and French version of the report is available on the NEPAD Website on the links below:

<http://www.nepad.org/resource/global-hunger-index-africa-report>

<http://www.nepad.org/resource/le-rapport-africain-de-lindex-de-la-faim-dans-le-monde>



“The experience at the launch of the Global Hunger Index Africa Edition was one of stress, anxiety, relief, sighs and life-long learning; organised within a few days and against all odds, it all seemed impossible, and the only energy left to ‘power the engine’ was the will-power! If there is anything to learn, it is the appreciation that success does not lie in having all resources available and in good time; rather what drives success are the soft-ethical matters such as team-work buttressed on an unwavering passion and zeal to ‘will-something into being’.” **Simon Kisira, NEPAD Head of Strategic Planning and Knowledge Management**

“It was an ecstatic moment to organize the 1st Global Hunger Initiative: Africa Report launch. We worked tirelessly to ensure that everything was in order prior and during the launch. Eventually, on the 2nd July the report was launched on a high level note with officials from the African Union Commission, the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), Regional Strategic Analysis Knowledge Support System (ReSAKSS), World Food Programme (WFP), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Representatives from government and the diplomatic offices, non-state actors and media.



Through the leadership of Dr Mayaki, NEPAD Agency CEO, who set the scene and delivered a key note speech during the launch, promoted investment in nutrition and food security in Africa.

Amazingly, the media and communication coverage of the launch went global and generated a lot of discussions around monitoring tools of hunger and food security in Africa in pursuit of Agenda 2063. The whole experience was just phenomenal!”

Kefilwe Moalosi, Food and Nutrition Security Officer

NEPAD Agency CEO speaks to the Youth and Media



As part of the efforts to create a platform for African youth to start talking among themselves on issues that concern them and the continent, the NEPAD Agency hosted an engagement session between its CEO and the youth and media attending the 29th African Union Summit.

The proposal to host the session stemmed from the need for the NEPAD Agency to fully engage African youth and media on issues and topics that directly affect them.

Dr Mayaki spoke to and with the Youth on various issues, including Industrialisation, agriculture, urbanisation, nutrition and food security, migration and many challenges and opportunities facing the African continent.

Below are some memorable quotes from Dr Mayaki on these issues:

“In a continent where the median age is 19 years old, governance cannot be the same as in other regions of the world, where you have a median age of forty and more. The huge proportion of young people in our continent leads us to think about governance systems in a different manner.”

“The AU has decided to tackle the issue of harnessing the youth dividend. There must be a platform where debates take place so the youth, through the media, can input into policy design processes and implementation.”

“Africa is the only region that has not been fully exploited which explains the scramble for its natural assets.”

“The natural resources of this continent cannot belong to a few, they need to belong to many.”

“Such events provide a perfect opportunity for the NEPAD Agency to advocate on its approach to Youth empowerment. It is important for youth and the people of Africa to understand the NEPAD Agency’s role in youth development and addressing issues of unemployment, migration, conflict and many other challenges facing African youth. With NEPAD advocacy, equal opportunities and proper direction, the youth will be set to have a more informed and secure future,” **Jacinta Ndegwa, Private Secretary to NEPAD Agency CEO**

“Technological innovation is a must in our industrialisation process because we are late-comers in the global economy.”

“The state has an important role to play because it is its responsibility to support small-scale farmers to become micro entrepreneurs.”

“Agricultural transformation will lead to industrialisation because it will create better conditions of wealth in rural areas and allow a diversification of a rural economy.”

“For trade to happen, we need to produce more, and we need to focus on diversified production.”

“On urbanisation vs ruralisation of the youth – Policy wise, we need to transform the rural space, to make it attractive to youth”

“If we do not tackle the conditions of the poor in rural areas, we will not be faced with migration issues, instead we will have to tackle governance issues as this might lead to conflict and absence of peace.”

“The main challenge we face in the next thirty years, 400 million Africans alive today will come into the job market, so we cannot do business as usual.”

“In the last twenty years, Africa has made progress in terms of nutrition. But, we still need to do more and we need to do it quicker. We must remember that Hunger has a cost and impacts on GDP.”



For access to the whole discussion, the link below is available on the NEPAD Website: <https://livestream.com/accounts/2466140/events/7567490/videos/159185817>



NEPAD Agency and ACBF collaboration meeting

The NEPAD Agency team, led by Dr Ibrahim Mayaki also held a collaboration meeting with the African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF) whose delegation was led by Prof Emmanuel Nnadozie, ACBF Executive Secretary.

The main objective of the meeting was to discuss areas of mutual interest and cooperation and to also discuss ways to strengthen the existing partnership between the two organisations.

The possible areas of collaboration discussed during the meeting include the implementation of Capacity Development priorities in the first 10 Year Plan of Agenda 2063 and institutional capacity development for Regional Economic Communities.



Prof Emmanuel Nnadozie, ACBF Executive Secretary (left) at the meeting with Dr Ibrahim Mayaki

“The AU Commission Chairperson, H.E. Mr Moussa Faki Mahamat shared the proposed work plan for the Commission by the next January 2018 summit. He highlighted, the first issue which was to implement the relevant decisions to be taken by the Assembly in light of the report of President Paul Kagame of Rwanda, on the implementation of the reform of the African Union.

The second issue is that of peace and security, with the objective of silencing the guns by 2020. The third a Humanitarian action in solidarity with the victims of drought, famine and forced displacement. The fourth priority strategic development issues, such as executing some integral projects for the benefit of African people. The Chairperson emphasised the importance to speak with one voice as the fifth course of action.



In addressing a number of key continental issues, the NEPAD Agency can enhance the positive effects for development through implementable policy choices. To harness the development potential in the Continent, we need to narrow the target and deepen our impacts.” Pamla Gopaul, NEPAD Agency Policy Officer

Address by H.E Paul Kagame during the 29th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the Union



Addis Ababa, July 3, 2017- “I would like to begin by expressing my appreciation to their Excellencies, President Condé and President Deby, for their leadership and support in the task assigned to us of supervising the implementation of the reform.

I also congratulate Chairperson Moussa and his team for the progress that has been made.

I am grateful to the many Heads of State who have found the time to share their ideas, both in person and in writing, all the while re-affirming their unwavering commitment to following through on our decision.

Finally, we honour the foresight of the former Heads of State whose hard work and wisdom left us with a strong foundation for continental unity.

In short, we are as committed and united as we were at the outset. This fact is the first and most important item which I have to report to you today.

There is another critical point to be aware of. As evidence mounts that this reform is real and irreversible there have been expressions of polite surprise, bordering on discomfort, from external parties.

Accommodating an articulate and effective African Union in the world order challenges entrenched interests and assumptions. Even those who wish us well may have reason to discourage a more independent and organised Africa. We should be prepared to react accordingly.

This should only serve to remind us of the reasons we felt the need to make these changes in the first place. It is therefore important to prepare the framework for the upcoming partnership summit in Abidjan in advance, and within the spirit of our reform. We are off to a good start in implementation. There are fewer obstacles than might have been expected. The African Union is an organisation of enormous complexity and significance, integrating the interests and aspirations of more than a billion people in 55 countries on the world's second-largest continent.

We have held a series of very fruitful consultations since January with the Chairperson of the Commission, the Supervising Heads of State, and members of the Executive Council and Permanent Representatives Committee.

That team of Heads of State comprises the Chairperson of the African Union, His Excellency President Alpha Condé, and his predecessor, His Excellency President Idriss Deby.

I would like to present some of the topics that have been raised during those consultations for our consideration. But before doing so, I would like to recall the wider context.

For any major institutional change, it is very normal for problems to be identified. Stakeholders are within their rights to do so. And indeed, many of the issues which have been raised are in order, and merit our attention.

The reform process contains the flexibility to improve as we go along, and we will continue to listen to each other and incorporate feedback.

The key principle we must insist on is not to allow political or technical dilemmas to override our strategic imperatives, but rather to address them as they arise. We must work together and find the solutions that allow us to keep moving forward.

The issue of the level of representation at the Assembly meetings was raised, and so I put it to you for consideration.

On the one hand, the decision we took was clear that Heads of State may not be represented by officials below certain levels, and that was Vice President, Prime Minister, or the equivalent.

This was because of the very important principle that this is a leaders' summit.

On the other hand, from time to time, there may be circumstances justifying representation by Foreign Ministers, who by their very nature are fully empowered to represent their governments. There should be a process to allow that to happen, as necessary.

The problem comes when the exception becomes routine. Soon enough, we are not getting the value out of these Summits that we need and expect.

Without going back on our original decision, we should discuss a formula to prevent this matter from becoming a self-defeating obstacle to our work.

The question of the location of summits was also raised. We might consider two perspectives in our discussion.

First, our starting point should be that our organisation has an established way of doing things, including hosting an annual Ordinary Summit at our Headquarters.

Second, there will be no shortage of major events for other Member States to host, including Extraordinary Summits when necessary, as well as the Coordination Summit between the African Union and Regional Economic Communities, every July.

The Implementation Matrix already handed to you leaders in this room is offered as a realistic guide to what it will take to deliver the reform in a timely manner.

The reform can be substantially complete by our Summit in January 2019, which would adequately reflect the urgency of seizing the narrow window of opportunity before us.

This target is ambitious, but also achievable, if we work together with the same spirit of openness and conviction that has brought us this far.

Maintaining this pace requires a very strong and capable Reform Implementation Unit. Since the structure and mandate of this group was often raised during our consultations, allow me to say a few words about it.

Chairperson Moussa's vision for the Unit fully meets our needs and expectations. What remains is to ensure he has the necessary cooperation and support for the Unit to discharge its responsibilities.

In this, it must be made clear that the Reform Implementation Unit is part of the Office of the Chairperson and is accountable to him. It has no other reporting lines. The Chairperson, in turn, answers to the committee of Heads of State that I mentioned earlier.

However, it goes without saying that the success of the Unit requires frequent consultation with all concerned organs, structures, and stakeholders.

The Unit cannot be, and will not be, an inaccessible agency that conducts its work in secret. It will be transparent because it works for, and on behalf of, all of us.

Finally, the implementation of the Johannesburg and Kigali Financing Decisions came up repeatedly throughout our consultations. These measures are the nerve centre of everything else we are doing. The independence and self-reliance of the African Union is an existential question for our continent.

The Financing Decisions imply an increased level of financial commitment from all Member States. There is no way around that. We have agreed to pay or even make sacrifices where necessary. In fact, I am glad to say that around ten countries have already started to implement what we have agreed.

However, the burden must be shared equitably and fairly and we will always listen to each other and find solutions. There is enough flexibility built in to the Financing Decisions to deal with any challenges that might arise.

We have been here before in the past, only to retreat. We should maybe not want to repeat the same. We should look at this process as the last best chance for the African Union to fix its finances and enhance its capabilities and finally secure the esteem of the people we serve, of this continent.

The fact that many countries, almost one-fifth of our Members, have already begun to implement the 0.2 per cent levy on eligible imports shows that it can be done. Even more Member States are actively preparing to do so. They are all to be commended. The issue of the timing of the budget process was also raised. However, I understand that the Finance Ministers will convene immediately after this Summit and proposals to address this technical matter will be ready for our consideration in due course.

I am very happy to report to you that implementation is well underway, and that none of the problems identified is a serious obstacle.

In the months ahead, a lot will be required of all of us, beginning especially with the Commission, but not forgetting the Heads of State.

And in fact, on this point, let me also remind us that sometimes when Heads of State and Government have made decisions, there have been problems where some lower levels have gone ahead and wanted to review these decisions.

I suggest that where matters are to be reviewed, the best way to do so is to bring the matter back to Heads of State to see what they can do differently. But not changing the decisions of Heads of State when they have pronounced themselves.

We will continue to keep you informed and seek your counsel all along the way. Each of us is needed, personally, to help carry this reform mandate.

It is up to us to drive it forward and keep up the momentum, with constant mobilisation. This is, after all, an undertaking of Heads of State and it must be therefore respected as such.

The stubborn culture, of going back and forth, I think we have spoken about that several times in the past, and maybe we will need to find ways of reining it in, because it comes to a level that shows, if I may say so, indiscipline. We cannot continue to operate like that. We have to do business differently.

When we say, let's be quick about these things, nobody is being disrespectful and it should not be construed as such. It is just how we should be conducting our affairs, with energy, purpose, and resolve.

We all have serious assignments before us. The next six months are the most intense and consequential period of the entire reform.

Numerous detailed proposals need to be submitted to the Assembly for debate and adoption at the next Summit in January 2018. This is our window of opportunity. We cannot lose the momentum that has been built or allow the sense of urgency that has been driving us forward to fade away.

These reforms are long overdue. In Africa, too often, we keep promises the way we keep time; even the promises we make to ourselves and to our own future generations.

How is Africa supposed to rise, except by completing this reform? The much bolder initiatives that we envision will remain only dreams until we do so.

Where there is still some hesitation, let's not get too concerned about it. Most likely, it is the result of misunderstanding and failure to communicate adequately and we will sit as a family and address it, as we always do.

I wish to thank you for listening to me and for the support I have received from all of you. Thank you for your kind attention."

The NEPAD Agency also participated in the following AU and NEPAD Governance statutory sessions:

- 34th Ordinary Session of the Permanent Representatives' Committee: 27th - 28th June;
- 31st Ordinary Session of the Executive Council: 30th June - 1st July 2017
- 29th AU Assembly: 3rd - 4th July 2017.

"It is clear that we must find an African solution to our problems, and that this can only be found in African unity. Divided we are weak; united, Africa could become one of the greatest forces for good in the world."

Kwame Nkrumah