



OPENING REMARKS BY THE DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE AFRICAN UNION
COMMISSION,

H.E AMB. KWESI QUARTEY.

20th session of RCM-Africa
(Marrakech, Morocco on 23 and 24 March 2019)

Excellences,

Distinguished participants,

Dear Colleagues,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, it is my pleasure to welcome you all to this 20th session of the RCM-Africa in Marrakech, where we will be discussing issues pertinent to Africa's Development, but most importantly looking at innovative and comprehensive ways to effectively "deliver as One".

Distinguished participants,

Ladies and gentlemen,

As we gather here for the 20th session of the RCM-Africa jointly organized for the third time by UNECA and the AUC, I would like to recognize and commend the efforts that both institutions have demonstrated in recent years to find systemic solutions to address Africa's development complexities, while seeking to improve our capacity to deliver. I would also like to take this opportunity on behalf of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, HE Moussa Faki Mahama, to reiterate our deepest condolences to the families and friends of the victims of the recent air crash in Ethiopia; our thoughts and prayers also go to the victims of the Cyclone Idai in Mozambique, Malawi and Zimbabwe as our continent is mourning once again. May the souls of our departed brothers and Sisters to rest in peace.

Taking into account the AU theme of the year, this 20th Session would among other things consider the challenges of refugees and internally displaced persons in Africa; in this regard, it is imperative that our deliberations are very people-centered, in line with the African Common Position (CAP) on the Global Compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration with the tremendous support of the UN.

The recent establishment of the Continental Operation Centre in Khartoum shows commitment by Member States to effectively tackle organized criminal groups involved in human trafficking and smuggling.

I therefore believe that better coordination of the works under the compacts for migration and on refugees will further facilitate our engagements.

Since its establishment, the RCM-Africa has evolved from a consultative body to a Joint AU-UN Mechanism looking at coordinating support to the African Union and its organs. This shift has been of particular importance in deepening ties and collaboration between the African Union and the UN system. We expect that this mechanism will continue to provide guidance and visibility on the achievements at continental level.

In so doing, the previous sessions of RCM-Africa have provided a good ground to ponder upon what has been done, where to leverage and recalibrate available resources, as well as devising ways to further improve support to the AU development agenda.

The 20th Session of the RCM is a defining moment in the history of both our institutions in view of the ongoing institutional reforms, marked by the necessity for efficiency in delivering on both AU Agenda 2063 and the UN SDG agenda 2030. In that line, the AU leadership has echoed the need to realign focus on the pressing developmental needs of the continent as priorities, looking among others at issues of:

- **Regional Integration: comprising the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), the Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM), the Free Movement of Persons, Goods and Services:** We do recognize the economic potentials of having a single African big market and this cannot be over emphasized. So far 52 countries are signatories and 15 have ratified showing good momentum and progress; and in doing so, ensuring free movement of the people and Goods is crucial; works are ongoing with technical experts from Member States and partners to harmonize the various related protocols. The issuance of African passport is among the African strategic initiative intended to come as a possible rescue to disband all the restrictions to move which will eventually create a conducive environment for Africans to trade with each other
- **Silencing the guns by 2020 in support of Peace and Security:** under the leadership of the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government, creating a Conflict-Free continent, with the intention of exploring concrete options to definitively silencing guns in Africa is key. It's an on-going process where coordinate efforts have been fruitful in some regions already. It is a recognition of the nexus between Peace & Security and Development.
- **Climate Change:** The recent development dynamics have shifted drastically to embrace new challenges to meet socio-economic and environmental the needs of our populations without compromising the needs of future generations. Africa's capacity to meet its development targets has been captured within the Agenda 2063, which aligns itself with the global sustainable development agenda within the UN Agenda 2030. Addressing the challenges and vulnerabilities associated to climate variations is crucial today in the context of very low and poor mitigation capacities and strategies in most communities in Africa.

- **Women, Gender and Youth:** The leadership of the African Union has been pushing for a more gender equal environment. We are all aware that the Gender Equality and Women Empowerment Strategy was adopted last year by the Assembly, moving towards a 50/50 gender parity and 35% youth representation. This is the situation that has to prevail at national levels as echoed and being implemented by member states.
- **Capacity Building - Clear Division of Labor and the AU Theme of the Year:** I will like to commend work achieved to date by the RCM Mechanism in trying to harmonize both our institutions activities and better align our activities. This effectively forms the basis for more synergy and robust engagement with different stakeholders; a clear division of labour is crucial in driving our institutional reforms for smooth transition.
- **Capacity Building:** In addressing the complex development challenges of Africa, Capacity Building is a lever if we have to achieve our goals. As clearly stated in earlier meetings, it's necessary to innovate and provide necessary skills to individuals to be able to effectively contribute to building our societies.
- **AU Theme of the year– 2019 (The year of Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons)**
–: Dealing with issues of illegal migration has been at the core of the African Union work in recent years. African Union has developed robust normative frameworks governing forced displacement; in the AU Agenda 2063, the African Union Humanitarian Policy Framework and the AU Common Position on Humanitarian Effectiveness have also outlined broader vision for revamping the humanitarian and development architecture. Several African countries have also embarked on the piloting of the Comprehensive Refugees Response Framework (CRRF) which, at the national level, encouraged policy reforms and implementation of innovative programs. These national approaches and practices are instrumental in the development of the Global Compact on Refugees.

In the same vein, the African Union Commission has been working tirelessly to ensure that the RCM-Africa Joint Secretariat is strengthened through meaningful collaboration and consultations between parties. In this respect, we have put in place an AU—RCM Secretariat to work closely with the UNECA as a joint Secretariat.

As emphasized in the recent retreat in Debrezeit in February, the decisions to reorganize the structures and portfolios of the AU Commission leadership will ultimately impact our overall

development strategies and priorities; RCM-Africa can indeed play a facilitative role in this process.

I would like to end my remarks by challenging ourselves today to ensure that our deliberations are effectively translated into concrete actions and provide solutions on the way forward.

While remaining optimistic as to the future of the RCM, I wish you fruitful deliberations, a wonderful time here and safe trip back to your respective destinations.

I thank you for your kind attention!

HE Agbor Sarah Mbi Enow, Commissioner for Human Resource Science and Technology representing HE Deputy Chairperson of AUC, Amb Kwesi Quartey; on behalf of the HE Moussa Faki Mahamat Chairperson of the AUC, welcomed the distinguished participants to the 20th Session of the RCM and expressed the Commission's deepest condolences to the families and friends of the victims of the recent air crash in Ethiopia, as well as the victims of the Cyclone Idai in Mozambique, Malawi and Zimbabwe.

On the onset, Her Excellency recognized and commended the efforts that the UN and the AU have demonstrated in recent years to find systemic solutions to address Africa's development complexities, while undergoing deep Institutional reforms at both institutions. She underscored the need to ensure that the discussions are very people-centred, as the African Union looks this year at finding solutions to the challenges of refugees and internally displaced persons in Africa; in line with the African Common Position (CAP) on the Global Compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration with support of the UN. She also acknowledged the recent establishment of the Continental Operation Centre in Khartoum; this showing commitment and efforts by Member States to effectively tackle organized criminal groups involved in human trafficking and smuggling.

She further expressed the need to realign focus on Africa's pressing developmental needs echoed by the AU Leadership, comprising 1- **Regional Integration (comprising the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), the Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM)**, 2- **Silencing the guns by 2020 in support of Peace and Security** 3- **Climate Change**, 4- **Women, Gender and Youth**, 5- **Capacity Building**, 6- **Clear Division of Labor** and 7- **the AU Theme of the Year**.

Finally, Her Excellency Commissioner, reiterated the AU commitment to strengthen the RCM-Africa Joint Secretariat through the establishment of an AUC-RCM Secretariat to work closely with the UNECA as a joint Secretariat; while challenging the distinguished participants to translate the deliberations of the discussions into concrete actions.

