

Ethiopian Premier urges African leaders to work hard towards making AU reforms successful



Addis Ababa, November 17, 2018 -The 11th Extraordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union (AU) kicked off at the AU headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia today.

Among the issues to be discussed at the two day-the summit include the AU institutional reform process including reform of the AU Commission, mandate of the AU Development Agency (AUDA) and financing the Union.

Speaking at the opening of the summit, Ethiopia's Prime Minister Dr Abiy Ahmed highlighted that the Union's wide reforms were necessary not for the sake of initiating reforms, but because it is a must.

Drawing on the Pan-African vision, he asks leaders of the African Union to stand together to survive changing global dynamics instead of acting solitarily and emphasizes that it is leaders of African states that need to set the right expectations and pace.

He added the importance of togetherness through economic cooperation and integration as well.

Prime Minister Dr Abiy Ahmed referenced the renewal taking place in Ethiopia, particularly highlighting the opening up of political spaces, release of prisoners, lifting bans on media and blocked websites, and most importantly the measures taken to crack down on corruption through a strengthened judicial system.

He also shared how the strengthening of relationships with Eritrea is contributing to stability in the Horn of Africa, by shifting the war narrative to one of mutual cooperation.

Moreover, he emphasized that one of the reform initiatives that is of paramount importance to him is equal representation of women in key decision-making and leadership positions, which have been one of the key pillar of his reforms.

Noting that African Union reforms requires great work in a journey requiring maximum effort, the Prime Minister concluded his address calling upon African leaders to work hard towards making the reforms successful.

Rwandan President and current Chairperson of the African Union, Paul Kagame, for his part said "the purpose of this Extraordinary Summit is to advance the institutional reform of our Union. Events on our continent and across the world continue to confirm the urgency and necessity of this project."

He added the goal of the reform is to make Africa stronger and give its people the future they deserve and called on member countries to unite so that the reform would achieve its prime goals.

In his address, the AU Chairperson also welcomed the lifting of sanctions against Eritrea by the United Nations Security Council.

According to him, the lifting of the sanction will contribute to the ongoing process of normalization in the Horn of Africa.

The Chairperson thanked of Ethiopian and Eritrean leaders Prime Minister Dr Abiy Ahmed and President Isaias Afewerki, respectively, for their courageous actions, and the other leaders who worked with them.