



**CLOSING REMARKS BY HIS
EXCELLENCY, PRESIDENT JULIUS
MAADA BIO, AT THE MINISTERIAL
MEETING OF THE AFRICAN UNION
COMMITTEE OF TEN ON UNITED
NATIONS REFORMS, FREETOWN, 15
DECEMBER 2018**

Ministers,

Permanent Representatives and Ambassadors,

The Commissioner for Political Affairs of the

African Union Commission,

Members of the Diplomatic and Consular Corps,

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good afternoon and Thank you!

Oona kusheh!

Gracias,

Obrigado,

Shukran

Je vous remercie pour votre excellent travail.

While we are thinking in French and on a lighter note, I am reminded of the French critic and cynic, Jean-Baptiste Alphonse Karr's quip about hard work by very hardworking people like you. Jean Baptiste Alphonse Karr says <<**Some people grumble that roses have thorns; I am grateful that thorns have roses.**>> You may have disputed over but reached agreement on these final recommendations. Thorns you may have been during debate and dialogue sessions but I am very proud of this rose, this final product that each of you has contributed to producing. As I said at the outset, yours is truly a labour of love for the rights and dignity of generations of Africans. I will

communicate these recommendations promptly to colleague heads of State and Governments. This strategic framework will constitute the roadmap of our future discussions and engagements.

As I indicated yesterday in my opening remarks, we are not merely revalidating our **legitimate** call for Security Council and UN Reform and we are not merely repeating the Common African Position as espoused in the Ezulwini Consensus and in the Sirte Declaration. We are moving to acting on our legitimate claim. We are giving meaning to our call for a comprehensive reform of the Security Council and to call for equitable

representation in all Organs of the United Nations.

With this, we now start working hard towards actualizing Africa's demand for two Permanent seats with all the rights and prerogatives of current members, including the right of veto (although Africa is opposed in principle to the veto), and two additional Non-permanent seats.”

The Common African Position embodies the consensus and collective will of Africans. It is also the most viable argument we can collectively present on behalf of 1.2 billion people, the second most populous continent, and the second largest land mass on earth. This collective commitment to

the Common African Position was strongly reaffirmed during the Twenty-Eighth Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly held in Kigali in July 2016. Let me remind you Ministers and Permanent Representatives, that Africa's participation in the Intergovernmental Negotiations process in New York, as well as at other multilateral and bilateral forums is firmly rooted in the principles outlined in the Ezulwini Consensus and Sirte Declaration on the Reform of the United Nations. Our message should therefore be clear - ours is a continental aspiration.

Now is the time to man the ramparts. We should not relent or founder; we should not stall or totter. Our cause is just. This document is a call-to-action. Let us be guided by the strategies we have deliberated so studiously on and outlined so well. It is imperative that we intensify our engagements at all levels within our region, across interest groups, and deepen our engagements with groups that seemingly have competing interests. More than ever before, we need to stay united and approach Regional Groups within the United Nations, including the Arab League, the Asia Pacific Group, Western and Eastern European Groups.

The road ahead may be long; the tasks may be daunting; but we must maintain and build upon the great momentum we have garnered here over the last two days. As we celebrate the centenary of Nelson Mandela, let us be guided by his exhortation that << it is always impossible until it is done.>> I am confident that our goal will be achieved.

On behalf of my colleague Heads of State, I thank this Ministerial Meeting for your great work. I also thank the African Union Commission. My generous appreciation and gratitude to you --

Ministers, Ambassadors, Permanent representatives and Technical Experts.

1. I hope we have made your stay comfortable, productive and memorable! Finally, I would like to thank the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation for facilitating the hosting of this historic Ministerial Meeting.

I enjoin all of us to remain steadfast and committed to continuing to work hard for the Common African Position and Goal. As the great American statesman, Thomas Jefferson reminds us "Do you want to know who you

are? Don't ask. Act! Action will delineate and define you." Again, I thank each and every one of you.