STATEMENT BY

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ON THE 26TH COMMEMORATION OF THE GENOCIDE AGAINST
THE TUTSI IN RWANDA (KWIBUKA26)

UNDER THE THEME: “REMEMBER-UNITE-RENEW”

AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA
07 APRIL 2020
Fellow Africans

Youth, Ladies and Gentlemen

Today we commemorate the 26th Anniversary of the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda (KWIBUKA26), under the theme: “Remember-Unite-Renew”.

This is the twelfth year since the African Union started the annual commemoration of the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda. However, this year our commemoration activities have been limited due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. Although we will not be formally gathering at the African Union Commission for this event as usual, I encourage you to commemorate this day from wherever you are.

This annual commemoration affords us an opportunity to reflect, and continue the fight against genocide, its ideology, denial and impunity with a view to ensure that never again shall Africa experience such a heinous crime against humanity.

In this regard, I would like to pay tribute to the leadership and the people of Rwanda for consistently working towards “Never Again” and for emerging through resilience and unity from the terrible past and putting Rwanda on a development path that continues to inspire many countries on our continent and beyond.

Fellow Africans;

Between April and July 1994, the world stood still in awe as more than a million people were killed in a space of one hundred days in Rwanda. As we remember the fallen mothers and fathers, brothers and sisters, sons and daughters in Rwanda, we should not be oblivious of the fact that genocide is always well planned, deliberately executed with impunity, yet genocide is also always followed by denial.

We should, therefore, redouble our efforts in fighting genocide ideology, its denial as well as impunity. If genocide ideology persists, its denial will continue unabated and impunity will reign. This task should not be the responsibility of the leadership and people of Rwanda alone. It is the collective responsibility of the African Union, Regional Economic Communities/regional mechanisms and all Member States, CSOs, the youth organisations, the women’s movement, Media and Academia. We should collectively combat genocide ideology, impunity and denial working hand-in-glove with the international community and all other stakeholders.

Fighting impunity should equally be at the heart of our collective efforts as AU member states as well as the international community by arresting, prosecuting or extraditing indicted fugitives. Last year at its 836th meeting held on 3rd April, the AU Peace and Security Council called upon countries to arrest, prosecute or extradite
fugitives accused of genocide. It is imperative that countries move towards implementation of this decision.

This commemoration should remind us of a past never to be repeated. It should challenge us to deal with the present and the future in our efforts towards achieving peace, reconciliation, accountability, justice, social harmony, constructive management of diversity and the respect for and protection of human and peoples' rights on the African Continent.

Our Commemoration of KWIBUKA26 this year assumes a special significance given the AU Theme for this year (2020) “Silencing the Guns: Creating Conducive Conditions for Africa’s Development”. I wish to seize this opportunity to call on all Africans to renew our commitment to promote peaceful and inclusive societies that will silence the guns for the attainment of socio-economic development and structural transformation and provide a firm foundation for building the Africa We Want and the Africa we Deserve.

Let us “Remember-Unite-Renew”.

I thank you.