

**Statement by H.E. Mahmoud Ali Youssouf Chairperson of
the African Union Commission**

On the Occasion of Africa Day 2026 25 May 2026

Delivered by

H.E. Ambassador Alhaji Sarjoh Bah, PhD

**AU Permanent Representative to the People's Republic of
China**

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His Excellency Martin Mpana, Ambassador of the Republic of Cameroon to China and Dean of the African Diplomatic Corps in China

His Excellency Telesphore Irambona, Ambassador of the Republic of Burundi to China and Chairperson of African Union

His Excellency Miao Deyu, Vice Minister of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China

Your Excellencies Distinguished Ministers of AU Member States here present

Your Excellencies Esteemed Members of the Group of African Ambassadors in China

Excellencies Invited Guests, and Friends of Africa

Distinguished Members of the vibrant and diverse African community in China

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good evening.

On this auspicious Africa Day 2026 here in the historic and magnificent city of Beijing, I bring warm fraternal greetings from H.E. Mahmoud Ali Youssouf Chairperson of the African Union Commission. It is indeed a pleasure and an honour to be celebrate with you my first Africa Day in China.

The Chairperson has mandated me to deliver his Africa Day message to you, which I will proceed to do now.

Today, Africa commemorates sixty-three years since the founding of the Organization of African Unity — a historic milestone that continues to inspire our collective pursuit of unity, liberation, dignity, and development.

As we mark this year's Africa Day under the theme, "Sixty-three (63) Years of Unity, Integration and Development, Let's Celebrate Together," we reaffirm our unwavering commitment to the aspirations of Agenda 2063 and to building the Africa We Want.

Africa Day is both a celebration of our shared heritage and a recognition of Africa's growing role in shaping global affairs. Guided by the spirit of Ubuntu — "I am because we are" —our continent continues to champion solidarity, cooperation, and shared humanity in an increasingly uncertain world.

Over the past year, Africa's voice has continued to gain prominence on the global stage. Our permanent membership in the G20 marks a historic step toward ensuring that Africa participates fully in global economic decision-making and contributes meaningfully to international solutions on peace, climate, food security, trade, health, and sustainable development.

The African Union also continues to advance institutional reforms aimed at building a stronger, more effective, and more responsive Union capable of delivering on the aspirations of our people.

This year's African Union Theme of the Year— "Assuring Sustainable Water Availability and Safe Sanitation Systems to Achieve the Goals of Agenda 2063" — highlights the importance of water security, climate resilience, public health, and sustainable development as essential foundations for Africa's future.

Africa remains united in calling for a fairer and more representative multilateral system, including comprehensive reform of the United Nations Security Council to correct the long-standing historical injustice against our continent.

We also welcome the growing international momentum on reparatory justice and historical redress. In this regard, the

efforts led by Ghana at the United Nations General Assembly have helped elevate the global conversation on reparations and the enduring legacy of slavery and colonialism.

This year also brings pride to our continent as nine African national teams prepare to participate in the FIFA World Cup — the highest representation in history — reflecting the extraordinary talent, ambition, and rising global influence of Africa's youth. We wish them every success in helping bring the cup home.

On this Africa Day, I call upon African diplomats and representatives across the world to continue working closely with the African Group in various capitals to strengthen Africa's collective voice and advance our shared priorities.

I also express appreciation to the African Union's partners for their continued cooperation and solidarity in supporting peace, integration, development, and institutional transformation across our continent.

As we celebrate Africa Day, let us renew our faith in the power of African unity, the promise of Pan-Africanism, and the limitless potential of our people.

Happy Africa Day.

I thank you.