

**Opening Remarks By
H.E. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf
President of Liberia and
Chair, High Level Committee on the Post 2015 Development Agenda**

Johannesburg, South Africa

June 13, 2015

Excellencies,
Members of the High Level Committee;
Dr. Nkosazana Zuma, Chairperson of the African Union Commission;
Dr. Anthony Mothae Maruping, Commissioner of the African Union
Commission;
Distinguished ladies and gentlemen;

It gives me pleasure to welcome you to the 3rd meeting of the High Level Committee which will consider the progress report on our efforts to integrate Africa's priorities into the global agenda which is being formulated by the international community. I am heartened by the attendance considering the number of Committee meetings that are taking place, many simultaneously.

Let me, on your behalf and in my own name, extend appreciation to President Jacob Zuma and the people of South Africa for their warm hospitality and for the excellent facilities made available for our work. We are grateful to the Chairperson, Dr. N. Zuma and Commissioner Maruping and his team for keeping sharp focus on the work of the Committee and providing steadfast support, including the arrangements made for the convening of our meeting today.

Colleagues, I want to thank you for making available your Sherpas who, despite very important national responsibilities, have dedicated time to provide effective follow up of the work that has been done.

In keeping with usual practice the Sherpas convened on June 7th in Pretoria. They reviewed this draft report and decision and have commended them to us

for our endorsement. We will have the opportunity to exchange views on the report and the draft decision following the presentation by the Commissioner.

In framing the Common African Position (CAP), we acknowledged the critical importance of the new agenda to the development of our countries and our continent. Our expectations are that this agenda will enable us to complete the unfinished business of the MDGS and propel our economies towards transformative change and sustainable development; that it will engender positive change in the lives and circumstances of our people and achieve the overarching objective of poverty eradication. This is our common purpose which we must continue to pursue with one voice.

Broadly, the report confirms that we are speaking with one voice around the negotiation tables and that the CAP remains the guide for the actions of our negotiators. We are engaged in two-pronged negotiations that are proceeding on separate but complementary tracks, both of which are nearing conclusion. We will be in Addis Ababa in exactly one month from today, and in New York two months thereafter to affix our signatures to a new global development agenda. Time is of essence and there are still challenges to overcome. So, let us today hold our discussions with this sense of urgency and with guarded optimism.

I thank you.