

STATEMENT

Thank you, Excellency, for yielding the floor to my delegation once again.

Excellencies,

It would be recalled that in February 2023, this august body overwhelmingly endorsed an agenda item proposed by the Republic of Ghana, which culminated in the Assembly Decision AU/Dec.847(XXXVI) under the theme “Building a United Front to Advance the Cause of Justice and the Payment of Reparations to Africans.” In the said decision, the Assembly directed Ghana to co-organise with relevant stakeholders and host an international conference in 2023. Pursuant to this directive, the Accra Reparations Conference, christened ARC2023, was held in Accra, Ghana, from 14th to 17th November, 2023.

I had the greatest honour of opening the Conference and delivering the keynote address in the presence of about three hundred delegates drawn from the continent and the Diaspora. Key personalities in attendance were His Excellency Azali Assoumani, President of the Union of Comoros, the Prime Ministers of Burundi, Barbados and Togo, the Deputy Chairperson of the African Union (AU), and host of others.

Excellencies,

Permit me to share some of the key recommendations of the Conference, as detailed in the outcome document, the Accra Proclamation on Reparations. These recommendations are meant for consideration and necessary action by the African Union Commission, with the view to sustain the thrust gained over the years in our collective quest for reparations against the backdrop of the lingering detrimental effects of the egregious acts of the trans-Atlantic slave trade and colonialism.

Among others, the Proclamation calls for:

- The hosting of an international conference involving former colonial powers and the African Union Commission on the issue of reparations;**
- Establishment of the Office of the AU Special Envoy on Reparations, in accordance with the due processes of the AU Commission and in consultation with the Executive Council, to coordinate all activities on reparations and rally activists across the continent and the diaspora; and**
- The establishment of a Global Reparations Fund to advance the campaign for reparations in Africa, in close cooperation with the African Union Commission;**
- The designation of the AU Theme of the Year 2025 to Reparations, entitled “Justice for Africa Through Reparations,”.**

Excellencies,

Let me elaborate further on the proposal to designate the AU theme of the Year 2025 to Reparations. As we may be aware, the year 2025 will

commemorate the 200th anniversary of the signing of the Indemnity Treaty in 1825 between Haiti and France. Through this debt Agreement, Haitians compensated their oppressors and their descendants for the privilege of being free. The pivotal significance of this event to the African continent and global history cannot be discounted as it makes Haiti the crown jewel of resistance against slavery and colonial oppression.

Besides resonating with the struggles faced by many African nations during their own quests for independence, the Indemnity Treaty of 1825 is a reference point in our discussions on reparations, economic justice, reform of the international financial architecture and human rights. Thus, endorsing the proposal would be a strong demonstration of solidarity, an acknowledgement of our shared history and further demonstration of our unwavering commitment to the cause of reparatory justice.

I, therefore, urge this august body to endorse the draft Decision on reparations based on the outcomes of the Accra Reparations Conference.

Excellencies,

In addition, the issue of justice and reparation is intrinsically linked to the legitimate and rightful desires of people of African descent to reconnect with their ancestral homeland. In our pursuit of accountability and reparations

through restorative justice for historical injustices against the African people, it is imperative for Member States of the African Union to recognize the right of people of African descent to return to Africa as an inherent birthright.

Consequently, I call on this august body to once again affirm the birthright of people of African descent and the African Diaspora to return their ancestral homeland. To this end, I present a draft decision, entitled *DECISION OF THE AFRICAN UNION FOR THE RECOGNITION OF THE RIGHT OF RETURN OF THE AFRICAN DIASPORA TO MEMBER STATES AS A BIRTHRIGHT* for your consideration and adoption.

I thank you all for your kind attention.