

**SIXTH COORDINATION SUMMIT
21 JULY 2024
ACCRA, GHANA**

**SPEECH OF H.E. MOUSSA FAKI MAHAMAT
CHAIRPERSON OF THE AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION**

**Your Excellency Nana Akufo-Addo, President of the Republic of Ghana,
Excellencies, Heads of State and Government, Chairmen of Regional Economic
Communities and Regional Mechanisms,
Madam Deputy Chairperson of the Commission,
Commissioners,
Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa,
President of Afreximbank,
Madam Executive Director of the African Union Development Agency, AUDA-
NEPAD,
Presidents, Executive Secretaries, Secretaries General of the Regional Economic
Communities and Regional Mechanisms,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I would like, first of all, to warmly thank H.E. Nana Akufo-Addo, President of the Republic of Ghana, as well as the Government and people of Ghana for the excellent hosting of this Sixth Coordination Summit and even more for all the efforts made in its preparation in order to ensure the necessary conditions of conviviality and comfort for its full success.

At a time when I regret a certain weakening of PanAfricanism, the convening of our meeting, here, in this beautiful country of Pan-Africanist exaltation, the eternally resonant voice of the apostle and icon of this doctrine, Kwame Nkrumah, has never faded.

It continues, each time we tread this land, shaping African history, to awaken, in the very depths of our being, this indelible nostalgia for a great design, for a galvanizing dream of our political struggles of today. and tomorrow.

As this is the last Coordination Summit for me, calling forth the memory of Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, during a meeting devoted to African integration, is a moving invitation to a deep meditation on what our permanently tense utopias have become geared towards the achievement of collective, inclusive well-being.

**Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

The African Union was born from this immense project. It has not disarmed in the face of its complexity, the uncertainties that run through it, the difficulties that its pursuit reveals, nor by the intimidation generated by the numerous political, health, economic crises, and even less by the erratic trajectory of a stifling international order. Under the vigorous leadership of our Heads of State and Government, the flame of this grandiose project has remained lit, although sometimes flickering under the effect of headwinds.

Here we are meeting for the 6th edition of our Coordination Summit, coordination between the AU, the RECs and the Regional Mechanisms, on the basis of a Revised Protocol and corrected for a greater clarification of roles, for more refined specialisation and stronger interdependence.

What would the AU be without the RECs? A locomotive without wagons. And what would the RECs look like without the Union? A disparity of Regional entities without cement, without anchoring, without reference or common global vision.

Lately, I have continued to think aloud, what is, now, nothing more than an open secret. Our RECs are not doing well. Their effectiveness, their credibility and their weight in the general enterprise of Unity have, unfortunately, been greatly eroded.

The AU itself is experiencing disaffection, which is clearly exposed during our Summits. Who among us has not been offended by the fact that Summits continue without a single President, except the one who is chairing the Summit. Often, no Ministers and in the end few Ambassadors. Let us not close our eyes. This repetitive spectacle is ravaging our credibility. An awakening is imperative, both at the level of the RECs and at the level of the Continental Organisation.

Excellency Mr. Chairman,

The outcome of our integration efforts is crystallised in the establishment and operationalisation of the African Continental Free Trade Area. It is an achievement, which

embodies the main dimensions of Regional integration. Ensuring its optimal functioning presupposes the solution to a set of problems, which hinder a harmonious march towards the final destination designed by the Abuja Treaty.

Consequently, without neglecting the brilliance of the progress already made, thanks to the efforts of all, I would like to draw our attention to the inadequacies which continue to challenge us in the completion of the work of integration.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Abuja Treaty of 1991 and more recently the implementation of the AfCFTA were decisive stages in the slow but irreversible process of integration. This resulted in definite desires to establish conditions for greater fluidity of intra-African trade, through the emphasis placed on Trade Facilitation, the reduction of Tariff barriers, Rules of origin and the initiative on Guided trade. This progress was reinforced by a set of Protocols on the mobility of capital, on the free movement of persons and by a vision to address the infrastructure deficit, considered to be the major constraint to integration.

At the same time, the institutional process was strengthened with the establishment of instruments and organs of Continental scope. The main handicap remains the delay in the operationalisation of African Financial institutions. I would like, here, to commend the efforts of President Nana Akufo-Addo, Champion for these Institutions. His commitment to bring this important issue to the forefront of the political scene of the African Union has not wavered despite the difficulties linked to the complexity of the matter. Thanks to the new lease of life brought by his dynamism, there is hope that these important Financial institutions will soon emerge from the baptismal font.

This challenge is obviously compounded by many others. They are mentioned in the various Reports, which are on your Agenda for your consideration. By combining the analysis of these Reports with the lessons that I have learnt personally, from this exalting experience of the steep path of integration, I feel the imperative duty to share with you, even in a small way, in broad outlines, the following few observations.

The First one relates to the issue of sovereignty. I am not talking about this function of the State but about this supranationality dimension, whose outlines need to be identified and the areas precisely determined. At the level of our integration, it is on this aspect that the relative autonomy of action and the subsequent subsidiarity to be recognised to Regional entities, will depend.

The Second one is to maximise the potential of the AfCFTA to make it an engine of growth and diversification of our economies, with a view to increasing trade within the Continent. Thus, the AfCFTA is obliged to become a lever that catalyses structural reforms which, in turn, will facilitate the creation of wealth, through the improvement of economic governance, the mobilisation of financing and human capital.

In connection with this observation, it would be desirable to go to major international

meetings, speaking with one voice. I have in mind, here, all the major fora of great importance, the first of which is the G20, of which we are now a member and where issues of a strategic nature are discussed, such as the reform of International Financial institutions, Climate Change, Debt, Energy transition. The Summit of the Future, scheduled in September 2024, in New York, looms on the horizon, as a meeting during which it would be appropriate for Africa to assert itself.

The Third observation relates to the capacity to guarantee a fair distribution of costs and benefits resulting from integration. The Compensation Fund, envisaged with Eleven billion Euros, as financial support, is to be welcomed. However, it will not be sufficient to bridge the development gap between Member States. It is, therefore, necessary to develop innovative solidarity mechanisms and mobilise targeted financing for the purpose of inclusive growth.

The Fourth observation relates to our capacity to build complementary relationships between the AfCFTA and the Regional Economic Communities. In this perspective, it is fundamental that the AfCFTA base its activities on the achievements of the RECs, as prescribed by the Treaty, which established it. Regional achievements would thus be valued, thereby leading to the overcoming of obstacles to integration present within the RECs and between the Member States.

Finally, the Fifth observation is linked to the enhancement of the interaction between the economic integration of the Continent and the consolidation of peace and security. As an illustration, the InterRegional Knowledge Exchange Platform (I-RECKE) on Early Warning and Conflict Prevention, launched in July 2022, deserves greater attention, in terms of appropriate financing, full support from the Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms, on the one hand and more vigorous coordination, on the other.

Excellencies,,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

These are some of the observations, from which emerge the challenges that I deemed useful to bring to your attention. There is no doubt that others will emerge from the presentations that we will hear from our different RECs. For us, it will then be a matter of thinking about the directions that should guide our future action, with a view to consolidating the integrative momentum, that fuels our projects and making it more dynamic, more efficient, more offensive.

I would like to end my remarks where I started. I must, with deference and as a Farewell, since this is my last Coordination Summit, in my capacity as Chairperson of the AUC, express my warm grateful thanks and my deep gratitude to the Heads of State, here, present or represented, for the constant support they gave me throughout my stay at the helm of the African Union Commission.

In this vein, I would like to welcome the quality of fruitful cooperation with the RECs and Regional Mechanisms, through which we were able to renovate the normative framework

of cooperation between the AU and the RECs in the general dynamics of the Institutional Reform of our Union.

To all the permanent actors in the Mi Year Summit, who will not be among those who wish and can continue to perpetuate the tradition, I say goodbye and we shall meet in other places.

I thank you for your kind attention.