

2015 Year of Women's Empowerment and
Development towards Africa's Agenda 2063



Dear Members of Parliaments, Your Excellences,

It is an honour for me to welcome you to the City of Addis Ababa and the headquarters of the African Union.

Africa has undergone tremendous transformation since the African Union was established. We have seen an end to many conflicts on the continent, unprecedented levels of growth, progress in human development and African nations elect governments in peaceful elections. At the AU Summit this January, the continent adopted a 50 year vision for itself, called Agenda 2063. Agenda 2063 commits all Africans to work towards a continent that is peaceful, integrated and prosperous. Above all, we are building a continent where ‘women are empowered and play their rightful role in all spheres of life.’”

The priorities in Agenda 2063 therefore focus on investments in people, their education and health, as well as in science, technology, engineering, research and innovation. It seeks to eliminate hunger by expanding agriculture and agro-processing; ensuring that women, who make up 70% of the agricultural workforce on the continent have access to land, to capital, inputs and markets. Through Agenda 2063, Africa will also address its infrastructure backlog, in energy, water and sanitation, transport, ICT and other social and economic infrastructure. It commits to using its mineral, oceanic and other resources to diversify economies, to industrialise, to create jobs and shared prosperity.

As I told assembled Parliamentarians in the WIP Summit 2013 in the European Parliament, the key to a lasting betterment of our society lies in achieving greater female leadership. Africa boasts 14 out of the 46 countries in the world where women account for more than a quarter of Parliamentarians. We have a strong and vibrant women’s movement on the continent, who are actively campaigning for greater representation, against child marriages, access to reproductive rights and for social and economic empowerment more generally. In Parliaments where we have a critical mass of women, we are beginning to see a difference in the laws and policies that are passed. We do however have to do more. During 2015, more than fifteen countries will have elections, and we will work hard to ensure that more women are elected.

It is with these issues in mind that we are proud to co-host with the European Commission the 2015 Women in Parliaments Summit, during the African Year of Women Empowerment and Development for the implementation of Agenda 2063.

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the 2015 WIP Summit where, together, we will work to foster New Leadership for Global Challenges.

Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma

Chairperson of the African Union Commission