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**STATEMENT BY THE
SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF
THE AU COMMISSION (SRCC) FOR SOMALIA AND HEAD
OF AMISOM, AMBASSADOR MAMAN SIDIKOU
ON THE OCCASION OF AFRICAN UNION DAY, HELD IN
MOGADISHU, SOMALIA ON 25 MAY 2015**

Your Excellency, President of the Federal Republic of Somalia,

Monsieur le Premier Minister, SRSG

Excellencies,

General Katumba Wamala, Chief of Ugandan Peoples' Defense Forces

Ladies and gentlemen,

I welcome you to this significant event, when we celebrate the day the Organisation of African Unity, the antecedent to the African Union, was formed, 52 years ago.

The formation of a union of African states was significant then, because it came at a time when many colonial powers were ceding ground, to allow self-determination for many countries on the continent.

This day is even more significant now, as the continent becomes intrinsically bound by the challenges that require tackling from a common front. The challenges are many and range from climate change, poverty, civil strife and terrorism among others.

Now, more than ever, African countries need to collectively interrogate themselves and seek effective answers to these challenges. It is only then, that we can find glory and credit for rewriting our own history.

Our organization must be commended for its intervention in most of the challenges facing the continent today. The role it has played in Somalia's stabilization efforts through the African Union Mission in Somalia is evident for all to see.

Today, Somalia is succeeding in redeeming its image. Together with the Federal Government and other key partners, we have worked tirelessly to fast track the country's path to recovery, with outstanding results.

Somalia at AU

Mr President,

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

As we reflect on the past 52 years, we must not forget how intertwined Somalia is, with the continent's success in the next 50 or so years.

These are the years in which Somalia and the continent at large must fully overcome the threat of terrorism and thrive in all spheres. Somalia's success story will see it host another African Union Summit, like it did in 1974. The signs are there, because the country is now on a path to full recovery.

AU 2015 Theme

The theme for AU Day this year, “Women’s Empowerment & Development towards Africa’s Agenda 2063”, is about the future we want for Africa, where women are included in the mainstream, to make the continent a better place.

If I may quote the Chairperson of the African Union Commission Her Excellency Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, “Having one woman who made it in a man’s world is not enough. We need a critical mass of women and gender parity, to change it into a humane world.”

Her statement truly challenges us to come up with ways in which we can make 2015 the African year of women, with concrete examples of women’s empowerment.

AMISOM & Women

As AMISOM, we have invested and will continue to invest in helping build capacity for Somalia’s women.

Under the AMISOM Gender Action Plan, our key policy considerations for 2015 include putting in place internal and external capacity building, on gender and human rights, as well as enhancing women’s political participation for 2016 elections, guided by the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325.

In conclusion, may I take this opportunity to thank the Federal Government of Somalia and especially the people of Somalia for staying the course. Because of you, Somalia is proving the skeptics wrong and becoming a success story.

Africa...One people...One Destiny

Long live Africa and her Diaspora!

Long live African solidarity and unity!

I thank you and happy Africa Day!!