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### PRESS RELEASE

## **African Union Southern Africa (AU-SARO) holds a Two Day African Union Model Summit in Mauritius, 19-20 August, 2014**



**AU Model Summit student Heads of Delegation with the guest of honour, Honourable Rajeshwar Jeetah, Minister of Tertiary Education, Research , Science and Technology, Heads of Tertiary Institutions, Government officials , other Heads of Diplomatic community and AU-SARO Regional Delegate to Southern Africa.**

**Port Louis, 20<sup>th</sup> August, 2014:** The African Union Southern Africa Regional Office (AU-SARO) and the Mauritius Ministry of Tertiary Education, Research, Science and Technology jointly held the African Union Model Summit which took place from 19th-20th August, 2014 at Mahatma Gandhi Institute in Port Louis, Mauritius. The student delegates were divided into subcommittees which looked at and deliberated on Agricultural, Rural Development, Water and Environment; Finance, Monetary Affairs, Economic Planning and Integration; Transport, Transcontinental and Interregional Infrastructures, Energy and tourism; and Education Science and Technology.

Two hundred sixty-five (265) student delegates from 11 public and private institutions represented 53 AU Member States in the simulation exercise. Present at the opening ceremony were the Minister of Tertiary Education, Research, Science, and Technology Honourable Rajeshwar Jeetah; Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare, Honourable Mireille Martin; Representatives of different ministries; UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative for Mauritius, Mr Simon Springett; Members of the Diplomatic Corps; Heads of tertiary education institutions; Professors;



**AU Southern Africa Regional Delegate Dr Salif Sada Sall delivering his opening remarks at the Model Summit.**



**Honourable Dr Rajeshwar Jeetah, Minister of Tertiary Education, Research, Science and Technology delivering his opening remarks at the Model Summit.**

Lecturers and members of staff of tertiary institutions.

In his introductory remarks, the Regional Delegate to Southern Africa, Dr. Salif Sada Sall pointed out that education of the African youth is one of the determinants of the economic development of the continent. This according to Dr Sall is reflected in the vision 2063 of African Union : “the Africa we want, which is to focus on education by planning to create Pan African universities, Centers of excellences through-out Africa in the next coming years.”

On behalf of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission (AUC), H.E. Dr Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, he congratulated the government of Mauritius on its commitment to building capacities of the youth and taking the universities of Mauritius to a greater heights and making them among the best Centres for excellence on the continent. The African Union is appreciative of the 50 scholarships that the government of Mauritius is offering annually to African students in support of capacity building programmes and thus promoting the AU agenda. So far, 17 students from African countries are already on the scholarship in Mauritius while another group of 17 will benefit from the scheme this year. Mauritius is considered as a cyber city for Africa and one of the few African countries offering quality infrastructure and logistic facilities for higher education in the Africa.

The Regional Delegate observed that Mauritius government is working tirelessly towards transforming the country into knowledge-based economy and that being an emerging economy and a strategically located, Mauritius can play a central role in facilitating trade and investment and building knowledge and human capacity in Africa. Thus, he said, the African Union Model Summit builds capacity at the grassroots in particular for the youth, by bridging the gap between the continental body and the African people. “It is a program that I hope has helped in training numerous graduate students on the principles and practices of the AU as well as exposing them to a wide range of global and continental issues that would be pertinent in their future assignments,” explained Dr Sall who was impressed by the way the students articulated the core issues that affect the continent and proposing solutions to them.

Further in his remarks, Dr Sall described the themes of the Summit as relevant to the contemporary setting of Africa’s agenda since advanced knowledge in science and technology is necessary for the transformation of the agricultural, industrial, infrastructural and social sectors of our economies. “I am delighted to know that the students substantially addressed relevant problems and challenges during this exercise”

The guest of honour at the function, Minister of Tertiary Education, Research, Science and Technology, Honourable Rajeshwar Jeetah, reminded the student delegates that the African Union has adopted the **African Youth Charter** that aims to strengthen, reinforce and consolidate efforts to empower young people through meaningful youth participation and equal partnership in driving Africa's development agenda. He said the charter gives the opportunity to the young people to voice their opinions about the challenges facing Africa. "The future belongs to you and you have to think about how to make it better," he said. The minister said 40 percent of the African population comprises of young people and thus the youngsters are the future of this world and need to be empowered.

He observed that some of the long term development challenges of Africa that have affected the youth are job creation, increasing competitiveness, infrastructural development, climate change, women's empowerment, reducing poverty, improving health and strengthening governance. "It needs to build the professional capacity and skills and invest in research, science and technology to address all these challenges." Honourable Jeetah added that Mauritius has been advocating for regional integration policy through increased trade, exchanges and joint projects in form of provision of access to higher education to African students. Mauritius according to Honourable Jeetah, is in a process of setting up an **African School of Leadership** which will contribute to the AU vision of developing Africa through education. Furthermore, "We are working together with South Africa in partnership with seven other African countries on the **Square Kilometer Array (SKA) project**, the largest telescope to be built in the world."



Assembly Chairperson of the AU Model Summit Yashraj Bhudoye (2nd R) with the team of his Bureau during the meeting of the Executive Council of the AU Model Summit

Addressing fellow students, the Assembly Chairperson of the Model African Union Summit, Yashraj Bhudoye said there was a need for sustained and concerted actions in the application of quality policies, strategies, programmes and investments driven by strong politicians and leadership. "Young people need genuine education and skills training; their ambition need to be matched with opportunities, they should be encouraged to join the farmers, adopt and advise new techniques of cultivation," he said while encouraging the student delegates to view African issues with a critical mind. He noted that the youth are expectant of the implementation of the Agenda 2063 which creates room for discussion among the stakeholders and allow the youth to have their say.





**Members of one of the Sub-committees and AU-SARO Regional Delegate to Southern Africa  
Dr. Salif Sada Sall at the AU Model Summit.**

According to the coordinator of the AU Model Summit organising committee in the Mauritius Ministry of Tertiary Education, Science, Research and Technology, Dr Kamlesh Dookayka, 11 public and Private participated in the programme as follows: University of Mauritius (UoM), University of Technology, Mauritius (UTM), Middlesex University (Mauritius Branch Campus), Mahatma Gandhi Institute/Tertiary (MGI), Universite des Mascareignes (UdM), Open University of Mauritius ((OU), Rishi Dayananda Institute, Indian Ocean Dental School and Hospital, Fashion and Design Institute, Amity University and YK Business School (YKBS).

In addition to students participating in the deliberations in the Subcommittees, some were also assigned different roles including, press team, security, ushers, and rapporteurs. Furthermore, 25 academic staff acted as mentors in their respective institutions to help supervise student delegates preparations. The student delegates came up with Decisions, Declarations and Resolutions such as decisions on promoting Sustainable Agriculture through education and Capacity Building; promoting Gender Equality through Access to Education; alleviating Poverty and Promoting Social Integration; and social-Economic Integration of the African Population to eradicate Poverty among others.

The AU Model Summit is an advocacy and capacity building programme in African Universities, which brings about substantial understanding of the operations and proceedings of the African Union and its importance in Africa's development within the Southern Africa Region. AU-SARO launched the first African Union Model Summit in 2010 in the Catholic University of Malawi (CUNIMA) in Malawi and this is currently being replicated in some other universities in the SADC region to sensitize the public on functions and roles of the AU. In 2014, apart from Namibia and Mauritius the programme is also expected to take place in the University of Lesotho.

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