

## **AU-SARO Celebrates the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the OAU/AU in Lilongwe, Malawi**

The African Union Southern Africa Regional Office celebrated the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the OAU/AU on 25<sup>th</sup> May with African High Commissions represented in Malawi, the broader African community as well as the international community at the occasion held at Capital Hotel in Lilongwe.

AU-SARO included the host country as well as the diplomatic community in its celebration event. Dr Salif Sada Sall, African Union Regional Delegate to Southern Africa delivered the message of the African Union Commission Chairperson, Dr Ncosazana Dlamini Zuma on the occasion of the celebration of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the OAU/AU. The guest of honour, Minister Defense of Malawi, Hon. Ken Kandodo and Her Excellency Mrs. Thandiwe Dumbutshena the Dean of the Diplomatic Corps in Malawi graced the gathering with their respective addresses. While the vote of thanks, was delivered by His Excellency Mr. Billy Munyumbwe High Commissioner of the Republic of Zambia to Malawi.

The commemoration of quest for unity in Africa could not be done without some retrospection and appreciation for the founders of the OAU and their peers who met in Addis Ababa in 1963. Honorable Minister Ken Kandodo commented in his address that Malawi was committed to the OAU from its inception and highlighted the role its founding president Dr Kamuzo Banda played in encouraging other African leaders to focus on liberating the continent from colonialism at the signing of the OAU Charter. He further added that “Pan Africanism remains an inspiration to Africa.”

Looking to the future, Her Excellency, Mrs. Thandiwe Dumbutshena said that given the historical significance of the event, it is an opportunity for reflection on the road Africa travelled and to chart the route-map for the next five years. Her Excellency further remarked that “five decades after the formation of the OAU, Africa is on the rise politically, economically, culturally and socially. At the same time, the continent is aware of and addressing the challenges it faces; and of the need to seize this opportunity to rejuvenate its mission, through Pan-Africanism and African Renaissance.” Dr Sall also looking ahead emphasized the points in Dr Zuma’s message and quoted that “our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Declaration and eventually Agenda 2063 that we will adopt in 2014 must therefore provide a mission framework that will result in rapid change, in the sustained efforts and in united action by a united Africa.”

AU-SARO will continue to commemorate the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the OAU/AU with a joint seminar with the African Development Bank on 12<sup>th</sup> June 2013 and a special edition AU-SARO Newsletter focusing on the work of the AU in the Southern Africa region to be distributed later this year.

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