

Rt. Hon. Raila Amolo Odinga Vision Statement for AUC Chairperson Position

If this is to be the African century, and we are to usher in a new era of prosperity and peace, then we must harness our vast human and natural resources, and combine the energy of our youth with the vision and wisdom of our leaders.

At this pivotal moment, at which our many opportunities risk being overshadowed by looming global challenges, we need an African Union Commission that can deliver on the priorities of the African peoples - both by catalyzing delivery on our continent and by commanding the global influence it rightfully warrants.

As a lifelong Pan Africanist who has represented my country across the continent and my continent across the world, a leader who has delivered results in every position that I have ever held - at the local, national and international levels - I am convinced that I am the ideal person to serve my continent and its Member States in this critical role as the African Union Commission Chairperson.

I have formulated the following priorities and strategies to address the most pressing challenges facing the continent.

1. Economic Transformation

Sustainable and equitable economic growth is foundational to our development. I will champion initiatives to create an enabling environment for businesses to thrive, attract investment, and promote innovation and entrepreneurship. I will drive policies that create jobs, reduce poverty, and improve lives. I commit to promoting industrialization, supporting manufacturing, and enhancing innovation through investments in education, healthcare, affordable energy, and skills development.

2. Enhancing Intra-African Trade

The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) is a transformative opportunity to establish a common market and boost intra-African trade. Currently, intra-African trade is paltry, the lowest among other continents, hindering our economic independence, and interdependence. I will advocate for open skies, visa policy harmonization, and infrastructure development to facilitate seamless connectivity and movement of goods, and peoples across Africa. Overcoming these barriers will spur economic growth and position Africa as a global economic player and leader.

3. Financial Independence

Africa must mobilize domestic resources to reduce reliance and overdependence on external funding. I will rally Member States and engage the private sector to finance AU priorities, ensuring sustainable development and delivery on continental goals. I will advocate for the reform of the global financial architecture to prioritize the needs of Africa to ensure equitable participation in global economic decisions.

4. Gender Equity and Equality

No demographic is more vulnerable to the challenges that face Africa than women and girls. This demographic is disproportionately impacted as refugees, farm workers, victims of conflict and gender-based violence, and in all sectors including education, health, food security, financial independence, and employment. Africa's Agenda 2063 cannot be achieved unless marginalization, exclusion, and

discrimination against women and girls are fully addressed. Throughout my life, I have been an indefatigable champion of women and girls. As Chairperson of AUC, I will prioritize opportunity, dignity, and security for women and girls across the continent.

5. Agricultural Transformation

Africa must feed itself. Africa needs to catalyze a transformative shift in its agri-food systems to cultivate more efficient, inclusive, and resilient agricultural practices. I will promote sustainable food production, agribusiness and the modernization of agriculture to reinforce food security, to foster job creation and enhance rural livelihoods. Moreover, I will ensure Africa's food systems are independent and secure from predatory practices. I will endeavor to promote market access within the continent and value addition in our agricultural and aquaculture sectors. This concerted effort will ensure sustainable development and address food insecurity in our continent.

6. Climate Action

First and foremost, my priority is to ensure that African people do not pay for a problem that they had no part in creating. As such, I am focused on mobilizing the necessary support for climate change adaptation, enhanced early warning systems, and rapid responses to climate-induced shocks. Further, I will promote climate-positive investments, and financing, leverage renewable energy resources, and integrate climate-smart strategies into our economic plans, to secure a sustainable future for Africa. Importantly, I will raise Africa's voice at international fora on climate change, climate action, and climate justice.

7. Continental Integration

Strengthening regional integration and cooperation is essential for promoting trade, infrastructure development, and economic growth. I will support Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and drive implementation of initiatives to enhance continental unity and prosperity.

8. Peace and Security

Peace and security are essential prerequisites for development. In this regard, I will prioritize conflict resolution and work with African leaders across the continent to address the root causes of instability, and promote functional institutions to create a conducive environment for Africa's development and prosperity.