

Kigali hosts 27th African Union summit

Rwanda is hosting the 27th Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union (AU) under the theme: '2016: Year of Human Rights with a particular focus on the rights of Women'. The AU passport is also expected to be launched this week at the summit.



The newly constructed Convention Centre (KCC) has given a facelift to the capital city, Kigali. All the major streets are carrying colourful visual branding of the summit artworks, with messages to popularise the vision of the African Union and its development Agenda 2063.

The Summit officially kicked off on 10 July 2016 with the Thirty-second (32nd) Ordinary Session of the Permanent Representatives Committee (PRC) at the Kigali Convention Center (KCC). The Ambassadors of AU Member States who constitute the PRC, are discussing items on the agenda in preparation for the 27th AU Summit, to be submitted to the Executive Council for adoption.

Meanwhile, the Twenty-ninth (29th) Ordinary Session of the Executive Council will start on 13 July 2016. The Ministers of External Affairs and other ministers or authorities designated by the governments of AU Member States will deliberate on the different reports of the Specialized Technical Committee (STCs) ministerial meetings organised by the AU Commission during the last six months.

The Twenty Seventh (27th) Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the Heads of State and Government of the African Union is scheduled to take place on 17 and 18 July 2016 in the presence of Dr Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, chairperson of the Commission of the African Union; Erastus Mwencha, deputy chairperson of the AU Commissioner and the eight AU Commissioners.

Meanwhile, during the Summit, the African Union (AU) is expected to launch the AU Passport, a flagship project of Africa's Agenda 2063 with the view to facilitate free movement of persons, goods and services around the continent - in order to foster intra-Africa trade, integration and socio-economic development.

Dlamini-Zuma has described this initiative as both symbolic and significant, calling it a "steady step toward the objective of creating a strong, prosperous and integrated Africa, driven by its own citizens and capable of taking its rightful place on the world stage".

Aspirations 2 and 7 of Agenda 2063, respectively, envision an Africa that is 'integrated' and 'united', and the introduction of the African Union (AU) Passport as an effort towards realising integration and unity on the continent.

The first group of beneficiaries will include: AU Heads of State and Government; Ministers of Foreign Affairs; and the Permanent Representatives of AU Member States based at the AU Headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

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