

## New Vision and Leadership of the African Union

Democratic Republic of the Congo President Felix-Antoine Tshisekedi Takes Over as the New Chairperson of the African Union (AU)

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Global Research, February 08, 2021

Region: [sub-Saharan Africa](#)

Theme: [History](#)

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*The African Union (AU) has held a two-day summit to elect new team, and to discuss a wide range of issues including a rise in coronavirus infections, border disputes and displacement due to fighting.*

At the virtual 34th Ordinary Session of the Assembly, **Felix-Antoine Tshisekedi**, the President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, took over the rotating AU Chairmanship from his South African counterpart, **Cyril Ramaphosa**.

The pan-African body’s assembly elected high-level officials to lead the African Union Commission. **Moussa Faki** was re-elected for the second term as AUC Chairperson following the end of his first term tenure (2017-2020). The Chairperson of the AU Commission is elected by the Assembly for a four-year term, renewable once.

The Chairperson of the AU Commission is the Chief Executive Officer, legal representative of the AU and the Commission’s Chief Accounting Officer.

Moussa Faki is now deputized by **Dr. Monique Nsanzabaganwa** from Rwanda. Dr. Nsanzabaganwa secured the majority of votes in a highly contested position, which saw two other female candidates contested for the post. Dr. Nsanzabaganwa becomes the first female to occupy the position of the Deputy Chairperson.

Election of the AU Commission Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson by the Assembly is conducted by secret ballot and a two-thirds majority of Member States eligible to vote. The 2021- 2024 elections of senior leadership for the AU Commission also saw the elections of Commissioners which was undertaken by the Executive Council.

The Executive Council elects the Commissioners, who are then appointed by the Assembly. Commissioners are elected for four years, renewable once.

In line with the Institutional Reforms of the African Union and the goal to improve the efficacy of program implementation, the portfolios of Commissioners were reduced from eight to six

**The Executive Council on 6th February 2021 elected the following Commissioners**

**Amb. Bankole Adeoye** (Nigeria) elected to head Political Affairs, Peace and Security docket.

**Ms. Josefa Sacko** (Angola), re-elected to head Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy and Sustainable Environment.

**Amb. Albert Muchanga** (Zambia) re-elected to head Economic Development, Trade, Industry and Mining.

**Dr. Amani Abou-Zeid** (Egypt) re-elected to head Infrastructure and Energy docket.

Elections for the posts of Commissioner Health, Humanitarian Affairs and Social Development and Commissioner Education, Science, Technology and Innovation were postponed to the next meeting of the Executive Council.

The incumbent Commissioners **Ms. Amira Elfadil Mohammed** (Sudan) and **Prof. Sarah Agbor** (Cameroon) respectively, will continue to serve in their current positions until the elections are conducted.

In his handing over speech, President Ramaphosa wished the new AU Chairperson, a successful Chairmanship and thanked the Heads of States of AU Member States as well as the AU outgoing bureau, for their support during the tenure of his mandate which he said, was marked by the prevailing sanitary crisis caused by the COVID19 pandemic.

President Ramaphosa highlighted some of the achievements under his chairmanship of the Union notably, the efforts to reduce conflict in the continent under the theme of silencing the guns; the economic empowerment of the women and youths, the enhancement of democracy and good governance, among other development programs under Agenda 2063.

In his acceptance speech, President Tshisekedi said it is a unique privilege for the Democratic Republic of the Congo be given this opportunity as Chair of the African Union at a symbolic and highly significant moment when “we are celebrating the sixty years of the disappearance of a worthy son of the Congo and Africa, Patrice Émery Lumumba, who strongly believed in the great destiny of Africa.

He did not hesitate to organize, in August 1960 in Kinshasa, then Leopoldville, the last Congress in the history of the great movement of Pan-Africanism. On June 30, 1960, shortly before his tragic death, he declared: “Africa will write its own history and it will be in the north and south of the Sahara, a history of glory and dignity”.

The incoming Chair of the Union commended President Cyril Ramaphosa, who, in difficult conditions due to the Covid-19 pandemic, was able to mobilize the efforts of all the countries of the continent and partners to face this challenging moment.

Highlighting the theme of the year 2021, the new AU Chairperson Tshisekedi said, Arts, Culture and Heritage constitute the foundation of the African renaissance and offers the opportunity for Africans to return to our roots. Culture is indeed, as Léopold Sédar Senghor said, at the beginning and at the end of everything, because it embraces all areas of life.

The African Union spearheads Africa’s development and integration in close collaboration with African Union Member States, the Regional Economic Communities and African citizens. The AU vision is to accelerate progress towards an integrated, prosperous and inclusive

Africa, at peace with itself, playing a dynamic role in the continental and global arena, effectively driven by an accountable, efficient and responsive Commission.

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***Kester Kenn Klomegah***, who previously worked with Inter Press Service (IPS), is now a frequent and passionate contributor to Global Research.

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