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Food Safety Highlighted in SecState-AU Chairperson Meeting

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Sanitary/Phytosanitary/Food Safety

SP3 - Build Demand in Developing Countries through Trade Capacity Building

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Report Highlights:

On March 8, as part of his trip to several African nations, US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson met with African Union (AU) Commission Chairperson Moussa Faki to reinforce our shared goal for a stable and prosperous Africa. Good governance, peace and security, and economic integration and engagement, were among the topics discussed. Increased two-way agricultural trade – facilitated by ongoing joint food safety efforts – was mentioned as an opportunity for greater collaboration. This report contains the full text of the joint communique.

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HIGH LEVEL MEETING BETWEEN AUC CHAIRPERSON AND U.S. SECRETARY OF STATE

Joint Communiqué

<http://www.peaceau.org/en/article/high-level-meeting-between-auc-chairperson-and-u-s-secretary-of-state-joint-communique>

Addis Ababa (8 March 2018): African Union (AU) Commission Chairperson Moussa Faki Mahamat today hosted U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson at the AU Headquarters in Addis Ababa. Both sides reaffirmed their strong commitment to the shared goal of a stable and prosperous Africa. Their conversation today builds upon their previous meeting in November on the margins of the annual U.S.-AU High Level Dialogue in Washington D.C. The United States was the first country to establish a mission uniquely dedicated to the AU in 2006.

During their meeting, Chairperson Faki and Secretary Tillerson reinforced their commitment to common priorities. The AU has made significant progress on its institutional reform process and on regional integration, including the planned signing of the African Continental Free Trade Agreement, and the launch of the Single African Air Transport Market. The United States applauds the work of the AU's Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC), which has successfully tracked and responded to disease outbreaks on the continent.

The AU has named 2018 as the year of "Winning the Fight against Corruption," and the United States supports the AU's fight against all forms of corruption to improve the conditions for free and fair trade and enable the environment for business and good governance.

Meeting against the backdrop of International Women's Day, the AU and the United States wish to join their efforts to those who decry gender-based corruption, inequality of opportunity, harassment, and gender-based violence.

Economic engagement between the United States and the AU is extensive and builds on existing U.S. programs such as Trade Africa, Power Africa, the African Growth and Opportunity Act, and Feed the Future. Opportunities for greater collaboration include joint trade facilitation workshops, and supporting greater agricultural trade between the United States and Africa, including by harmonizing agricultural standards and building on ongoing food safety standards efforts through the AU-led Partnership for Aflatoxin Control in Africa. *(Highlight added.)*

The AU's ongoing efforts to enhance its legal framework through the early entry into force of its Convention on Cybersecurity and Personal Data Protection will establish a sound basis for collaboration on efforts to develop cybersecurity capacities to protect Africa's citizens.

Peace and security remain a mutual priority. The February launch of a U.S.-supported unarmed, unmanned aerial surveillance platform to support the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) underscores commitment to the fight against terrorism in Somalia. The United States recognizes

the perseverance and sacrifice of African Union soldiers participating in AMISOM and acknowledges the need to ensure predictable and sustainable funding for AMISOM to enable it to achieve its mandate.

The Secretary and Chairperson agreed that the AU and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) should continue to press the parties in South Sudan for a negotiated solution, to protect the lives and welfare of innocent South Sudanese. They reiterated their commitment to punitive measures, as necessary, firmly grounded in IGAD and AU Peace and Security Council decisions, on those who hinder the peace process to demonstrate the united resolve of international partners and the African continent to effect peace in South Sudan.

The United States and the AU believe it is imperative that all parties in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) – including the Government of the DRC and the political opposition – work towards free, fair, and transparent elections in December 2018.

In the wake of recent attacks in Ouagadougou, Chairperson Faki and Secretary Tillerson also exchanged views on the situation in the Sahel. They applauded the G5 countries for their efforts; the AU welcomed additional U.S. support to G5 countries.

The U.S. underscored strongly its concerns with DPRK development of weapons of mass destruction. The AU and United States reiterated commitment to non-proliferation and called for strict adherence to U.N. Security Council resolutions.

Chairperson Faki and Secretary Tillerson committed to enhance the United States' and AU's strategic relationship at the sixth High Level Dialogue this year in Addis Ababa. U.S.-AU Technical Working Groups will lay the groundwork for that exchange.

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