



**EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT  
OFFICE OF THE PRIME CABINET SECRETARY  
AND MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AND DIASPORA AFFAIRS**

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**Press Release**

**For immediate delivery**

**Kenya lobbies for Eastern Africa's turn to field the next African Union Chair**

**Addis Ababa, February 16, 2024**—Kenya and its Eastern African neighbors have the first opportunity to produce the next chair of the African Union Commission, says **Prime Cabinet Secretary and Cabinet Secretary for Foreign and Diaspora Affairs Musalia Mudavadi**.

Speaking in Addis at the end of the 44<sup>th</sup> session of the AU Executive Council of Foreign Affairs Ministers, Dr Mudavadi said Eastern Africa was next in line for the AU leadership under the AU's election rules adopted as part of the AU institutional reforms,

*"The Central, Southern and Western Africa regions have had their share since 2002, so it is now time for the Eastern and Northern Africa regions,"* he said. *"Under the rotational rules, Eastern Africa has the first opportunity when the term of the current chair expires end of this year."*

The term of the current chair Moussa Faki Mahamat, a former Chadian Prime Minister, ends this year and elections for his successor are due early next year.

The AU election rules introduced in 2018 seek to promote principles of regional rotation, inter-regional rotation, gender and merit in the election of the AU chair and commissioners. The rotational process is alphabetical, thus, ranking Eastern Africa ahead of Northern Africa.

This agenda will be on the table the two-day AU summit of African heads of state and government this weekend. President William Samoei Ruto will be among the leaders attending the summit that focuses on building the resilience of Africa's education systems under the theme: **"Educate an African fit for the 21<sup>st</sup> century."**

Dr Mudavadi urged African governments to actualize the theme by scaling up their investments in education, to anchor it as a catalyst for inclusive growth and sustainable development.

*"Africa's prosperity will require significant investments in education and skills revolution to develop human and social capital,"* he said, underlining the importance of innovation and science as envisioned in the AU Agenda 2063.

Mudavadi also defended Kenya's human rights record, including police accountability to the citizens. Responding to an assertion on police impunity in the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights annual report, he affirmed the constitutional right of Kenyans to freely report any

allegations of police brutality and use of excessive force to the Independence Police Oversight Authority established under the 2010 Constitution.

*“The authority independently investigates such allegations and holds individual police officers personally accountable, including through prosecution,”* he said. *“Kenya undertakes to submit appropriate language to be annexed to the human rights report to address this specific issue.”*

The foreign ministers also reviewed a report on the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) that seeks to break barriers to cross border trade and investment among African countries.

It also put forth a request for the AU leaders to endorse a decision for Kenya to host an Africa Fertilizer and Soil Health Summit in May this year.

*“The summit will bring together all relevant stakeholders to agree on an Africa Fertilizer and Soil Health Action Plan, to support governments efforts towards food and nutrition security,”* said Dr Mudavadi.

In his contribution to a report on the Pan-African Parliament, Dr Mudavadi said recurrent leadership and operational issues continued to impede the effectiveness of the AU legislative body.

He expressed concern that PAP is exposed to legal, financial and reputational risks arising from decisions made by its leadership in violation of AU’s rules and regulations.

Mudavadi further supported draft terms of reference for an AU ministerial committee on counter-terrorism. Membership of the committee will include three member states from each of the AU’s five geographical regions.

The key decisions of the Foreign Affairs Ministers will be part of the agenda of the Heads of State and Governments Summit.

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