

Mr. President
Distinguished Heads of State and Governments
Ladies and Gentlemen, honourable members

- I would like to thank you for inviting me to speak at this closing session of the African Union Summit in the very week that Portugal assumes the Presidency of the European Union.
- This is the first time that a President of the European Council of the European Union has addressed the African Union Summit. I see this invitation as a sign of the political relationship that the African Union and the European Union wish to renew and strengthen. Our political relationship needs new impetus and new ambition. This is what is demanded by the world we live in.
- I would like to salute all the leaders here today and express my admiration for the renewed commitment of all the African countries in the African Union construction process.
- Lastly, a special word for the President of Ghana; on his recent visit to Lisbon I had the opportunity to learn more of his vision for Africa and for the world, with which I identify strongly.
- There is broad consensus between Europe and Africa on the mutual benefits and advantages of these regional integration processes; although they are complex and time consuming, the added value they will bring to the populations is undeniable.
- I would therefore like to praise the work of the African Union towards the unity, stability and progress of this vast continent.
- The Portuguese Presidency of the European Union also has an ambitious external agenda and this is what I wish to talk about.
- The EU has maintained close relations with almost all the regional blocs and with the main emerging powers and has held annual meetings at the highest level with most of the world's leaders.
- However, it is seven years since Europe last had structured institutional and broad dialogue with the African continent – which is an incomprehensible omission in European foreign policy and one that is prejudicial to both Europeans and Africans.
- You will appreciate that if there is one country that cannot allow this situation to prevail and that will do everything to overcome it, it is Portugal.

- But I also know that I can count on the good will and commitment of all the European and African leaders to our objective, which is imperative to the history of our two continents.
- Our commitment and dedication is nothing new because we were already central to the first and only Summit in Cairo in 2000 when Portugal last held the EU Presidency.
- Africa must be a priority for Europe, because Africa and Europe are part of each other's future.
- Portugal has pledged to hold the second EU-Africa Summit on 8th and 9th December. It will be an honour for me and for my country to welcome you in Lisbon. We want this Summit to mark a turning point in the relations between the two continents.
- It is our wish that the Lisbon Summit will launch a new strategic partnership between Europe and Africa. This partnership involves dialogue on:
 - The objectives of sustainable development,
 - Peace and security
 - Greater respect for human rights
 - The fight against poverty and endemic disease
 - A balanced and mutually advantageous management of migratory flows.
- These are the key points that we have defined and that structure the joint strategy we have worked on. However, in addition to a strategic vision, we also need a concrete action plan that addresses global issues such as climate change, migrations, development and others.
- In fact, Europe and Africa today have a common vision on the various global problems. A truly committed political partnership is therefore required to address these questions together.
- But it is necessary to assure that the strategic vision and the action plan translate into concrete results. This is why the EU-Africa Summit should result in a leading structure that is politically binding, comprehensive and which provides the guidelines for the relations between Europe and Africa in the future. Our ambition is to build a mechanism of global dialogue at the highest level that allows greater meaning to be given to Euro-African relations.
- It is my belief that these instruments – strategy, action plan and application mechanisms – can be approved at the highest level. This is how a year which commemorates both the 50th anniversary of the Treaty of Rome which instituted the European Union and the 50th anniversary of the independence of Ghana, the first Sub-Saharan country, where we are today, will be closed with a golden key.

- The success of this Summit is important to Africa and to Europe but also to the world. We count on the contribution, commitment and presence of all, so that we can achieve what we all hold as the greatest goal.