



## Press Release N° 088 /2014

## Students of King's University of Western Ontario (Canada) embark on a study trip to the African Union Headquarters



**Addis Ababa, 25 February, 2014:** As part of a study abroad program, about 50 students from King's University of Western Ontario led by Dr. Thomas Kwasi Tiekou, Professor of International negotiations and Director of African Studies program, on 18 February 2014, visited the African Union headquarters. This exercise was third of the kind organised by the University Professor.

Mrs. Habiba Mejri-Cheikh, Director of Information and Communication (DIC) welcomed the visitors as the host and

organizing directorate for public relations and educative tours at the AU.

The visitors received a several briefings from different resource persons of the AU to enlighten them on the activities of the Union. Addressing the visitors, H.E Erastus Mwencha, Deputy Chairperson of the AU Commission, introduced a background history of the Organisation and how it operates at continental and international levels. Mr. Mwencha shared with the students his years as a student in Canada before addressing the current strategic goals of the AU, its priorities and partnerships. He emphasized on the progress that made so far in the integration of the continent as well as its socio-economic and political development.

Ambassador Febe Potgieter-Gqubule, Special Advisor on Strategy Planning and Monitoring in the office of the AUC Chairperson, introduced the students to the Africa Agenda 2063 as a vision of the African Union for the next 50 years. She emphasized on the need to involve all the stakeholders to this process. She stated that the AU is determined to ensure that the guns are silenced by 2020. "It is everyone's wish to see a peaceful prosperous and sustainably developing Africa", underscored Amb. Febe.

Representing the Office of the Legal Counsel of the African Union, Mr Bright Mando, presented the functions and activities of the African Court of justice and the Court of Human People's Rights. The visiting students were further briefed on issues of

Agriculture and food security in Africa and the year of Agriculture (2014), by a representative from the Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture.

Mrs. Litha Musyimi-Ogana, Director of Gender and Women Development, addressed the issues on gender mainstream. She emphasized on the progress made in gender policy frame works and constitution among others. This was followed by a briefing on African Governance Architecture, Elections monitoring and other related issues by the representative from the Department of Political Affairs.

Meanwhile, the representative from the Economic Affairs Department briefed the students on the status of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Post-2015 Development Agenda while the representative of the Directorate of Information and Communication of the AUC presented the African Union branding campaign, calling on the students to join in promoting the African Union symbols, messages and programs in their respective locations.

The series of briefings put together to give the students a deeper knowledge about the African Union was crowned with a presentation on the development of peace and security in Africa, by a representative from the concerned department.

Ms. Esther Azaa Tankou, Senior Editorial Officer of the Directorate of Information and provided the guided tours to the students which consisted of a walk through the new and old buildings including the African Union situation room and the peace and security building.

As part of their course work, each student was expected after this visit to write about 15-page research essay on a topic related to the theme of *“AU as an actor in African and global affairs”*. The essays was put together in the form of student-edited volume and uploaded on official website of the University.

Worth mentioning that, since January 2014, the DIC has received over 1.500 visitors from different works of life to the AU headquarters under similar educative tours.

Nahom/ ETA