

AU Elects New Leader

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African leaders have elected South African Home Affairs Minister Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma as the new head of the African Union – the first woman and the first South African to hold that post.

Dlamini-Zuma defeated incumbent Jean Ping at the AU summit Sunday in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, after four rounds of voting.

She is the ex-wife of former South African President Jacob Zuma.

The top AU job has generally gone to an official from one of the smaller African countries. Dlamini-Zuma said she does not believe there is any connection between her coming from powerful South Africa and her desire to make this contribution to the AU.

The AU is taking on several regional crises. It is considering sending forces to battle armed rebels in the Democratic Republic of Congo. It also backs a plan by West African nations to battle Islamist militants in northern Mali.