

AFRICAN UNION
الاتحاد الأفريقي



UNION AFRICAINE
UNIÃO AFRICANA

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Creating One African Market

STATEMENT DELIVERED BY ALBERT M. MUCHANGA
COMMISSIONER FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY
AT THE OPENING CEREMONY OF THE
SEVENTH SESSION OF THE AFRICAN UNION MINISTERS OF TRADE
ON 12TH DECEMBER, 2018 IN CAIRO, EGYPT

CHAIRPERSON OF THE AFRICAN UNION MINISTERS OF TRADE,

**OUR GRACIOUS HOST, THE HONOURABLE MINISTER OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY OF THE ARAB
REPUBLIC OF EGYPT,**

HONOURABLE MINISTERS HERE PRESENT,

THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF THE ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA,

CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD AND PRESIDENT OF THE AFRICAN EXPORT IMPORT BANK,

MEMBERS OF THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS,

OUR STRATEGIC PARTNERS,

SENIOR TRADE OFFICIALS,

CHIEF NEGOTIATORS,

DISTINGUISHED DELEGATES,

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN.

WELCOME TO THE SEVENTH SESSION OF THE AFRICAN UNION MINISTERS OF
TRADE .

THESE MINISTERIAL MEETINGS ARE DEVOTED TO PROVIDING POLITICAL
OVERSIGHT TO THE ON GOING NEGOTIATIONS ON THE AFRICAN CONTINENTAL
FREE TRADE AREA.

YOUR PRESENCE REFLECTS YOUR STRONG COMMITMENT TO THIS
CONTINENTAL TASK.

I BRING GREETINGS FROM HIS EXCELLENCY MOUSA FAKI MAHAMAT,

CHAIRPERSON OF THE AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION.

HE ALSO SENDS HIS BEST WISHES FOR THE SUCCESS OF THIS MEETING.

HONOURABLE MINISTERS,

I AM SURE YOU ALL AGREE WITH ME THAT WE HAVE BEEN WELL RECEIVED AND WELL LOOKED AFTER BY THE PEOPLE AND GOVERNMENT OF THE ARAB REPUBLIC OF EGYPT.

WE ARE MOST GRATEFUL FOR THIS HOSPITALITY.

IT IS AN EXPERIENCE THAT WE SHALL ALWAYS CHERISH.

HONOURABLE MINISTERS,

SOME OF YOU WERE AT THE OPENING CEREMONY OF THE FIRST INTRA AFRICAN TRADE FAIR HELD YESTERDAY.

IT REMAINS FOR ALL OF US, INCLUDING MYSELF, TO VISIT THE PAVILIONS.

SINCE THE FAIR WILL RUN UP TO THE 17TH OF THIS MONTH, I REQUEST YOU ALL TO FIND TIME TO VISIT THE VARIOUS PAVILIONS SO THAT YOU SEE THE WIDE VARIETY OF PRODUCT OFFERINGS BY OUR ENTREPRENEURS, BOTH FROM WITHIN AND OUTSIDE AFRICA. THE ENTREPRENEURS WILL BE THE KEY DRIVERS OF THE AFRICAN CONTINENTAL FREE TRADE AREA.

LET ME AT THIS STAGE UPDATE YOU, HONOURABLE MINISTERS ON OUR EFFORTS TO MAKE THE AFRICAN CONTINENTAL FREE TRADE AREA WORK AND DELIVER TANGIBLE BENEFITS TO ORDINARY AFRICANS.

SINCE YOUR LAST MEETING IN DAKAR, SENEGAL THIS YEAR, WE NOW HAVE NINE DEPOSITS OF THE INSTRUMENTS OF RATIFICATION OF THE AGREEMENT ESTABLISHING THE AFRICAN CONTINENTAL FREE TRADE AREA.

THESE ARE KENYA, GHANA, RWANDA, NIGER, ESWATINI, CHAD, GUINEA, UGANDA, AND COTE D'IVOIRE.

THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLIES OF SOUTH AFRICA, MALI, SIERRA LEONE AND NAMIBIA HAVE APPROVED RATIFICATIONS AND SOME OF THE GOVERNMENTS OF THESE MEMBER STATES WILL DEPOSIT INSTRUMENTS OF RATIFICATION DURING THE FEBRUARY 2019 ASSEMBLY OF THE AFRICAN UNION HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT.

ALL IN ALL, WE HAVE THIRTEEN RATIFICATIONS. WE ARE REMAINING WITH NINE TO GET THE 22nd INSTRUMENT OF RATIFICATION THAT WILL FACILITATE ENTRY INTO FORCE OF THE AGREEMENT A MONTH LATER.

LIKE I SAID YESTERDAY IN THE OPENING CEREMONY OF THE FIRST INTRA AFRICAN TRADE FAIR, TWELVE MEMBER STATES HAVE THEIR RATIFICATION PROCESSES IN THEIR RESPECTIVE NATIONAL ASSEMBLIES AND ALL THESE ARE AT ADVANCED STAGES OF OBTAINING PARLIAMENTARY APPROVALS.

FROM THIS, IT IS CLEAR THAT THE MOOD TO CREATE AND OPERATE ONE AFRICAN MARKET IS POSITIVE.

THE WILL IS EQUALLY STRONG.

THE ENERGY IS SIMILARLY HIGH.

AGAINST THE BACKGROUND OF THIS CONDUCTIVE ENVIRONMENT, AFRICA WILL,

BY THE FIRST ANNIVERSARY OF THE AFRICAN CONTINENTAL FREE TRADE AREA
MAKE ITS AGREEMENT ENTER INTO FORCE.

THE CHAMPION OF THE AFRICAN CONTINENTAL FREE TRADE AREA AND HOST
OF THE JULY 2019 ASSEMBLY OF THE AFRICAN UNION HEADS OF STATE AND
GOVERNMENT, HIS EXCELLENCY M. MAHAMADOU ISSOUFOU INVITED HIS
COLLEAGUES TO THE FORMAL LAUNCH OF THE START OF OPERATIONS THE
AfCFTA MARKET IN ANTICIPATION OF THIS HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT.

THE LAUNCH CEREMONY WILL BE APPROPRIATE AND TIMELY.

LET ALSO ADD THAT WE DO NOT WANT TO DISAPPOINT MARKET PLAYERS
AFTER THE COMING INTO FORCE OF THE AGREEMENT ESTABLISHING THE
AFRICAN CONTINENTAL FREE TRADE AREA.

THE MARKET PLAYERS MUST OPERATE IN THIS MARKET WITH MINIMUM DELAY
AFTER ENTRY INTO FORCE OF THE AGREEMENT.

YOU WILL IN THIS RESPECT RECEIVE PROGRESS REPORTS ON THE RESULTS OF
NEGOTIATIONS ON RULES OF ORIGIN, SCHEDULES OF CONCESSIONS ON
LIBERALIZATION OF TRADE IN GOODS AS WELL AS SCHEDULES OF SPECIFIC
COMMITMENTS ON TRADE IN SERVICES WHICH ARE ALL CRITICAL TO THE
START OF OPERATION OF OUR MARKET IN THE SHORTEST TIME AFTER ENTRY
INTO FORCE OF THE AGREEMENT.

THERE IS ADDED GOOD NEWS RELATED TO PREPARING OURSELVES TO OPERATE
THE AFRICAN CONTINENTAL FREE TRADE AREA MARKET WITH MINIMUM
DELAY.

AT THEIR MEETING HELD IN LUSAKA IN SEPTEMBER THIS YEAR, YOUR CHIEF
NEGOTIATORS AGREED ON THE START OF WORK ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF A

MECHANISM FOR THE IDENTIFICATION, REPORTING, RESOLUTION MONITORING AND ELIMINATION OF NON TARIFF BARRIERS WHICH ARE, IN MANY CASES, WORSE THAN TARIFFS IN IMPEDING EFFICIENT TRADE FLOWS AMONG COUNTRIES.

WE EXPECT TO FINALIZE THIS ACTIVITY IN JANUARY NEXT YEAR AND BRING IT TO YOU FOR CONSIDERATION IN LINE WITH EXISTING CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION AND OVERSIGHT.

FURTHERMORE, THE SENIOR TRADE OFFICIALS WILL BE RECOMMENDING TO YOU HONOURABLE MINISTERS, SOME CONSENSUS THAT THEY REACHED ON THE ISSUE OF LISTS OF SENSITIVE PRODUCTS AND THOSE TO BE EXCLUDED FROM LIBERALIZATION. WE ARE BASICALLY MOVING TOWARDS A LEVEL OF 97% IN OUR TRADE LIBERALIZATION EFFORTS.

WITH THIS GOOD NEWS, THE OBLIGATION LIES IN EACH AND EVERY AFRICAN UNION MEMBER STATE TO SIGN AND RATIFY THE AGREEMENT ESTABLISHING THE AFRICAN CONTINENTAL FREE TRADE AREA SO THAT WE LAY THE FOUNDATION OF CREATING ONE AFRICAN MARKET, IN LINE WITH THE VISION OF THE AFRICAN CONTINENTAL FREE TRADE AREA.

HONOURABLE MINISTERS,

I WOULD LIKE AT THIS STAGE TO TURN TO THE ISSUE OF PHASE TWO NEGOTIATIONS.

THESE ARE ON INVESTMENT, COMPETITION AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS.

NEGOTIATIONS ON THE PROTOCOLS IN THESE THREE AREAS ARE SCHEDULED TO START NEXT YEAR IN LINE WITH THE ASSEMBLY DECISION ON THESE

IMPORTANT MATTERS. OUR LEADERS EXPECT TO CONSIDER THE DRAFT PROTOCOLS IN JANUARY, 2020.

THE DRAFT TEXTS THAT WILL SERVE AS THE BASIS OF NEGOTIATIONS ARE CURRENTLY UNDER PREPARATION.

HONOURABLE MINISTERS, YOU WILL IN THE SAME VEIN BE CONSIDERING A RECOMMENDATION FROM YOUR SENIOR TRADE OFFICIALS TO ESTABLISH TECHNICAL WORKING GROUPS AND THEIR TERMS OF REFERENCE TO FACILITATE EFFICIENT EXECUTION OF WORK IN THESE AREAS.

I AM SURE THAT YOU WILL AGREE WITH ME, HONOURABLE MINISTERS, THAT CONCLUSION OF PROTOCOLS IN THESE THREE AREAS IS IMPORTANT IN MANY RESPECTS.

OTHER THAN ENSURING THAT THE PRIVATE SECTOR FULLY BENEFITS FROM THE AFRICAN CONTINENTAL FREE TRADE AREA, THE PROTOCOLS WILL ALSO ENSURE EFFECTIVE FUNCTIONING OF OUR MARKET.

RULES OF COMPETITION PROMOTE FAIRNESS TO BOTH PRODUCERS AND CONSUMERS AS WELL AS INNOVATION, A KEY INGREDIENT OF DIFFERENTIATION AND COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE.

THE PROTOCOL ON INVESTMENT WILL REMOVE THE RACE TO THE BOTTOM AS IS THE CASE NOW WHEN WE INDIVIDUALLY PROMOTE INVESTMENTS. THIS WILL IN THE PROCESS FACILITATE THE FLOW OF QUALITY, LARGE SCALE AND LONG TERM INVESTMENTS INTO OUR MARKET. THESE ARE WHAT WE NEED TO LAY A STRONG FOUNDATION FOR RAPID ECONOMIC GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT.

OTHER THAN ALSO STIMULATING INNOVATION, THE PROTOCOL ON INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS WILL IN ADDITION PROVIDE FOR EFFECTIVE

PROTECTION OF INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS, INCLUDING TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE. IT WILL ALSO FACILITATE THE DEVELOPMENT OF GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATIONS. THESE ARE CRITICAL TO BRANDING AND MARKETING AGRIBUSINESS PRODUCTS ACROSS OUR CONTINENT.

HONOURABLE MINISTERS,

AS YOU NOTE THE EVOLVING WORK ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROTOCOL ON INVESTMENT, I WOULD LIKE TO UNDERSCORE AN ISSUE NOTED AND DECIDED UPON BY THE ASSEMBLY OF HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT.

IN NOUAKCHOTT, MAURITANIA THIS PAST JULY, OUR LEADERS SAW THE NEED FOR ALL AFRICAN UNION MEMBER STATES TO REMAIN FOCUSED ON DEVELOPING THE AFRICAN CONTINENTAL FREE TRADE AREA.

TO THIS END, THEY CALLED ON ALL MEMBER STATES TO AVOID ENTERING INTO THIRD PARTY FREE TRADE AREA AGREEMENTS WITH THIRD PARTIES.

IT SEEMS THE NOUAKCHOTT SUMMIT DECISION HAS NOT BEEN ADHERED TO.

ONE OR MORE OUR MEMBERS HAVE SIGNED FREE TRADE AREA AGREEMENTS WITH THIRD PARTIES AND ACTIVELY SEEKING TO SIGN ADDITIONAL FREE TRADE AREA AGREEMENTS WITH OTHER THIRD PARTIES.

CLEARLY, WE NEED TO STRENGTHEN THE REGIME FOR THIRD PARTY FREE TRADE AREA AGREEMENTS IN ORDER TO ENSURE THAT NONE OF THEM UNDERMINES THE AFRICAN CONTINENTAL FREE TRADE AREA.

WE WILL BE PROPOSING A DRAFT DECISION ON THIS MATTER FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION AND CONVEYANCE TO THE SUMMIT FOR FORMAL APPROVAL.

BEFORE I LEAVE THE ISSUE OF THIRD PARTY FREE TRADE AREA AGREEMENTS, LET ME SAY THAT AFRICA'S VOICE ABROAD WILL BE HEARD AND LISTENED TO WITH RESPECT IF AFRICA TRANSFORMS AND STRENGTHENS HER ECONOMY.

THE AFRICAN CONTINENTAL FREE TRADE AREA IS A STRATEGIC FOUNDATION FOR THAT.

IF WE UNDERMINE IT, WE ALSO UNDERMINE OUR PROSPECTS, BOTH AT HOME AND ABROAD.

THE AFRICAN CONTINENTAL FREE TRADE AREA WILL BE AS STRONG OR AS WEAK AS STATE PARTIES WANT IT TO BE.

THE CHOICE IS YOURS; YOURS, INDIVIDUALLY OR COLLECTIVELY.

HONOURABLE MINISTERS,

THE AFRICAN CONTINENTAL FREE TRADE AREA IS BEING COMPLEMENTED WITH THE SINGLE AFRICAN AIR TRANSPORT MARKET, THE PROTOCOL TO THE TREATY ESTABLISHING THE AFRICAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY RELATING TO FREE MOVEMENT OF PERSONS, RIGHT OF RESIDENCE AND RIGHT OF ESTABLISHMENT IN ADDITION TO THE PHASE TWO PROTOCOLS ON INVESTMENT, COMPETITION AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS EARLIER REFERRED TO.

THIS MAKES THE AFRICAN CONTINENTAL FREE TRADE AREA ENCOMPASS ELEMENTS OF AN INTERNAL MARKET.

AGAINST THIS BACKGROUND, WE SHALL BE RECOMMENDING A DRAFT DECISION WHERE YOU PROPOSE THAT THE THEME FOR THE UPCOMING JULY SUMMIT WHICH IS DEVOTED TO COORDINATION WITH REGIONAL ECONOMIC COMMUNITIES BE ON THE QUESTION OF BUILDING A ROADMAP TOWARDS THE AFRICAN INTERNAL MARKET.

IF THIS RECOMMENDATION IS ACCEPTED BY YOUR GOOD SELVES, WE WOULD BE READY TO DEVELOP A DRAFT CONCEPT PAPER BEFORE THE END OF THIS MONTH THAT WOULD SERVE AS A BASIS FOR DELIBERATION ON THE THEME BY THE JULY 2019 SUMMIT.

HONOURABLE MINISTERS,

BEYOND PHASE 1 AND PHASE 2 ISSUES, DIGITAL TRADE OR E-COMMERCE IS EMERGING AS A NEW ISSUE THAT AFRICA HAS TO EMBRACE AND EVENTUALLY MAINSTREAM INTO THE AFRICAN CONTINENTAL FREE TRADE.

WHEN WE EVENTUALLY DEVELOP AFRICAN THE INTERNAL MARKET, WE SHALL AT THE SAME TIME BE DEVELOPING THE AFRICAN DIGITAL INTERNAL MARKET.

HAPPILY, THE AFRICAN PRIVATE SECTOR WELCOMES WORK IN THIS DIRECTION AND WE WILL BECOMING UP WITH APPROPRIATE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION WHEN YOU NEXT MEET.

LET ME ALSO HASTEN TO ADD THAT WE ARE ALREADY HARNESSING THE RESOURCES OF THE AFRICAN DIASPORA TO INVEST THROUGH E-COMMERCE.

WE RECENTLY SIGNED A MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING WITH ONE OF THE MEMBERS OF THE AFRICAN DIASPORA, WHO IS WITH US IN THIS MEETING.

THROUGH THAT MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING, WE ARE JOINTLY ESTABLISHING A CONTINENTAL PLATFORM ON E-COMMERCE WHICH WILL, INTER ALIA ENABLE AFRICA DEVELOP DIGITAL ENTREPRENEURS AND IN THE PROCESS, CONTRIBUTE TO GENERATING EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR OUR YOUTH.

EFFORTS ARE ALSO ON-GOING WITH THE ECONOMIC COMMISSION TO DEVELOP

A REGULATORY FRAMEWORK ON DIGITAL ID. THE WORLD BANK HAS ALSO EXPRESSED INTEREST IN THE OVERALL DEVELOPMENT OF AN AFRICAN DIGITAL ECONOMY.

HONOURABLE MINISTERS,

THE ISSUE OF QUALITY PRODUCTS TO UNDERPIN INTRA AFRICAN AND INTRA-INDUSTRY IN MANUFACTURES IS OF CRUCIAL IMPORTANCE. WE WILL IN THIS CONNECTION BE WORKING WITH THE PAN AFRICAN QUALITY INFRASTRUCTURE TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF AFRICAN MANUFACTURED GOODS. THIS WILL INCLUDE DEVELOPMENT OF FIRM LEVEL CAPACITIES FOR BRANDING AND PACKAGING.

IN ORDER TO HAVE A PLATFORM THAT WILL ENABLE MINISTERS REACH OUT TO MANUFACTURERS ON A CONTINUOUS BASIS, WE ARE ALSO WORKING WITH THE AFRO CHAMPIONS INITIATIVE AND NATIONAL MANUFACTURERS ASSOCIATIONS TO ESTABLISH A PAN AFRICAN MANUFACTURERS ASSOCIATION.

BEFORE I CONCLUDE, HONOURABLE MINISTERS, I WOULD LIKE TO TOUCH ON SELECTED ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERES FOR YOUR INFORMATION.

THE FIRST ONE IS TO BRIEF YOU HONOURABLE MINISTERS ON THE RESULTS OF THE RECENT EXTRA ORDINARY SUMMIT OF THE AFRICAN UNION WHICH MAINLY FOCUSED ON INSTITUTIONAL REFORMS.

THE SUMMIT MERGED THE DEPARTMENTS OF ECONOMIC AFFAIRS AND TRADE AND INDUSTRY TO CREATE A NEW DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, TRADE, INDUSTRY AND MINING.

THE DEPARTMENTS OF PEACE AND SECURITY AND POLITICAL AFFAIRS DEPARTMENTS WERE ALSO MERGED.

WITH THESE REALIGNMENTS, THE MEMBERS OF YOUR COMMISSION WILL NOW BE EIGHT INSTEAD OF TEN.

GENDER AND REGIONAL BALANCE WERE RETAINED IN THE REALIGNMENTS.

THE NEW DEPARTMENTS WILL BE OPERATIONAL IN 2021 AND IN BETWEEN, WE SHALL BE EXPECTED TO COME UP WITH DRAFT STRUCTURES.

YOU WILL BE PERIODICALLY BRIEFED AS AND WHEN NEW INFORMATION COMES UP ON THE REFORM PROCESS WHICH IS AIMED AT ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND EFFECTIVELY SERVICE DELIVERY.

AGAIN ON ORGANIZATIONAL ISSUES, I WOULD LIKE TO INFORM YOU HONOURABLE MINISTERS THAT THE NEGOTIATION FORUM CONTINUES TO BE A PLATFORM FOR RECOGNIZING AND REWARDING TALENT.

SINCE WE STARTED, A NUMBER OF CHIEF NEGOTIATORS HAVE BEEN PROMOTED AS EITHER MINISTERS OR PERMANENT SECRETARIES/DIRECTORS GENERAL IN THEIR RESPECTIVE COUNTRIES.

THE RECENT PROMOTION IS THAT OF THE CHIEF NEGOTIATOR OF NAMIBIA, MS. ANNASCY MWANYANGAPO AS PERMANENT SECRETARY IN THE MINISTRY OF PUBLIC ENTERPRISES.

I AM SURE YOU AND OTHER MEMBERS OF YOUR RESPECTIVE GOVERNMENTS, WILL, HONOURABLE MINISTERS CONTINUE TO RECOGNIZE AND REWARD THIS FORMIDABLE BRAIN TRUST THAT HAS NOT JUST DRIVEN THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE AFRICAN CONTINENTAL FREE TRADE AREA BUT ALSO MADE AFRICA A KEY DEFENDER OF THE MULTILATERAL TRADING SYSTEM.

I WOULD ALSO LIKE TO STATE THAT AFRICA HAS SET HERSELF A NEW

STANDARD OF HIGH PERFORMANCE BY WORKING TOWARDS RATIFICATION OF THE AGREEMENT ESTABLISHING THE AFRICAN CONTINENTAL FREE TRADE AREA WITHIN A YEAR INSTEAD OF THE AVERAGE FIVE YEARS. IN ADDITION TO THIS, WE HAVE DELIVERED ON THE FIRST INTRA AFRICAN TRADE FAIR WELL BEFORE THE OPERATION OF THE AFRICAN CONTINENTAL FREE TRADE AREA.

WITH THIS SPIRIT OF HIGH PERFORMANCE, WE CAN SCALE ANY HEIGHTS TO CREATE THE FUTURE WE WANT AND DESERVE.

IN THIS REGARD, THE PROMISE OF THE AFRICAN CONTINENTAL FREE TRADE AREA MUST NOT BE BROKEN.

EQUALLY IMPORTANT, THE POTENTIAL OF THE AFRICAN CONTINENTAL FREE TRADE AREA MUST BE EXPLOITED TO THE FULL.

WITH BOLD DETERMINATION, FOCUS, RESILIENCE AND DELIVERY OF TANGIBLE RESULTS, WE CAN SUSTAIN OUR NEW SPIRIT OF HIGH PERFORMANCE.

WE CAN DO IT.

LET US DO IT.

IN THIS CONNECTION, I INVITE YOU, HONOURABLE MINISTERS, TO GIVE THE AFRICAN CONTINENTAL FREE TRADE AREA CHAMPION, HIS EXCELLENCY M. MAHAMADOU ISSOUFOU, AFTER THIS MEETING, A SET OF DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS THAT WILL ENABLE HIM REPORT TO HIS COUNTERPARTS THAT WORK ON MAKING THE AFRICAN CONTINENTAL FREE TRADE AREA WORK IS GAINING MOMENTUM AND IS POSITIONING US TO CREATE THE FUTURE WE WANT AND DESERVE.

THIS IS A FUTURE OF INTEGRATION, PEACE, STABILITY, PROSPERITY, HUMAN

RIGHTS AS WELL AS VOICE AND LEVERAGE IN THE GLOBAL ARENA.

I THANK YOU ALL FOR YOUR KIND ATTENTION.

I THANK YOU ALL FOR YOUR KIND ATTENTION.