



Creating One African Market

REMARKS

BY H.E. AMB. ALBERT M. MUCHANGA

AU COMMISSIONER FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY

**ON THE OCCASION OF THE CLOSING OF THE COMMEMORATION OF THE
FIRST EDITION OF AFRICAN INTEGRATION DAY,**

ADDIS ABABA, 9 JULY 2020

- **Your Excellencies,**
- **Dear colleagues**
- **Distinguished Guests and Participants who are joining us on Zoom, Facebook or YouTube from across the Continent and other parts of the world**
- **Good evening, good afternoon or good morning depending on your time zone!**

We have come to the end of our 1 week commemoration of the first edition of Africa Integration Day, which as you all will agree with me was a big success, considering the COVID-19 Pandemic context in which this took place.

Initially planned from 1st to 07 July 2020, the commemoration of the first edition of Africa Integration Day took place from 03 to 09 July 2020, due to some developments in Addis Ababa!

What is important is that despite these challenges, we showed resilience and courage, and rose to the challenges. This was a sign that going forward, we have a new mindset; and that is nothing will ever stand on our path towards an integrated, peaceful and prosperous Africa, as envisioned in Agenda 2063: the Africa We Want.

During the 07 day commemoration period, the following were achieved:

- 1- 10 Panel discussions/debates in the form of webinars, some of which involved former African Heads of State and Government, African Youth,

and the African Diaspora and covering a wide range of topics, including post COVID-19, energy, agriculture, creative art, financial institutions. These webinars drew the participation of more than 3000 participants, not including those who followed the commemoration on Youtube and Facebook; with the webinar on the intergenerational dialogue on the role of young people in accelerating Africa's integration through the AfCFTA attracting 400 participants. It is worth noting the participation of the African Diaspora in the US, Europe and the Caribbean, as exemplified in the rich panel discussion we just had;

- 2- Showcase and launch of various initiatives and programmes to foster trade and economic integration in Africa, including the Essential Innovation Design Accelerators;
- 3- The launching and rolling-out of key instruments and tools, which will facilitate trade integration on the continent, including: the AfCFTA Online Non-Tariff Barriers Monitoring, Reporting and Elimination Mechanism; the Launch of the Competition for Youth Start Ups Pavilion at the 2021 Intra-African Trade Fair by H.E. Mr. Issoufou Mahamadou, President of the Republic of Niger and Leader of the AfCFTA, and the launch of the African E-Commerce Platform, whose name is Sukokuo, a Swahili term which means "central market;"
- 4- The Presentation of Prizes for Africa Creative Arts Challenge organized in collaboration with the Afrochampions;

- 5- Africa Integration Day **Joint Statement** by H.E. Mr. Cyril Ramaphosa, President of the Republic of South Africa, Chairperson of the African Union; H.E. Mr. Mahamadou Issoufou, President of the Republic of Niger and Champion of the AfCFTA; and H.E. Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the AU Commission.

- 6- The other major results was the publication of the Africa Integration Day Brochure.

As we bring the commemorative activities to a close, I wish to conclude with three main messages:

- 1- The first message is a word of thanks to all our partners who have worked tirelessly with us to make this first commemoration of Africa Integration Day a memorable event. Let me mention the Regional Economic Communities, AfroChampions Initiative, AeTrade Group, African Development Bank (AFDB), Africa Export-Import Bank (Afreximbank), African Economic Zones Organisation (AEZO), AUDA-NEPAD, African Energy Commission, United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), Trade Law Centre (TRALAC); AUC Departments and AUC Missions abroad. Special thanks to H.E. Mr. Mahamadou Issoufou, President of the Republic of Niger and Champion of the AfCFTA; H.E. Obasanjo, and H.E. Helen Sirleaf Johnson for their active participation in some of the activities as well as the messages of support such as the one delivered by the King of Eswatini.

2- The second message is one of encouragement to African Union Member States and the Regional Economic Communities. I urge them to take advantage of the AfCFTA by putting in place all the necessary measures, so as to fully benefit from this huge single market of 1.27 billion consumers so that when we reconvene next year for the second edition, there will be even more results and achievements to celebrate. This will require working with all segments of the society; and in particular encouraging and facilitating intra-African private investment in national economies through the provision of conducive investment climates; collaborating with the private sector and academia in research and development; and working with the African Youth to harness their talents and innovative potentials, to support the industrialisation and economic diversification of the Continent a key lever to its trade and economic integration.

3- The third and final message is that of strategic focus to deliver on key programmes of trade and economic integration outlined in Agenda 2063; so that year after year, we can build on our present collective achievements and success to realize the next milestones on our journey towards the African Economic Community, which is to establish the African Common Market by 2023. If there is one main take away from this commemoration; it is, as stated by the Chairperson of the Union, H.E. Mr. Cyril Ramaphosa, President of the Republic of South Africa; the Leader of the AfCFTA, H.E. Mr. Issoufou Mahamadou, President of the Republic

of Niger and H.E. Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the AU Commission in their Joint Statement, and I quote: *“the future of Africa as regards recovery [from the COVID-19 Pandemic], development and resilience lies in accelerating its economic integration through the implementation, at the level of Africa, of the AfCFTA. The AfCFTA offers the best platform for us to build and deliver inclusive and sustainable development by using the large market space to mobilise investment.*

I thank you again for having participated in this commemoration of the first edition of Africa Integration Day; and look forward to the second edition in 2021. As we close the curtain for 2019 which was the focus of this year’s commemorative activities, let us go and convey the message that we are creating one African Market with huge opportunities for trade and investments.