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Statement

By

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Under-Secretary-General and

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At the Inauguration of the Africa Week 2015

The High-level Panel Discussion on:

***“Role of African Regional and Sub-regional
Organizations in achieving Regional Integration: the
Continental Free Trade Area within the context of the
First 10-Year Implementation Plan of Agenda 2063”***

Monday, 12 October 2015, 9:30 am-1:00 pm

New York/UNHQ – ECOSOC Chamber

Excellency Mr. Mogens Lykketoft, President of the 70th
session of the General Assembly

Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the
United Nations,

Honourable Commissioners, Ambassadors, Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to welcome all of you to this High-Level
Panel discussion.

Today's event is the grand opening of the Africa Week
2015, which my Office, the Office of the Special Adviser on
Africa, is organizing in partnership with the Economic
Commission for Africa, the Department of Public
Information, the AU and its Permanent Observer Mission in

New York, the NEPAD Agency, and the African Peer Review Mechanism, under the overarching theme “*Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development – Moving from Aspirations to Reality*”.

We are honoured to have H. E. Mr. Mogens Lykketoft, President of the 70th Session of the General Assembly and H. E. Mr. Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations, here with us to inaugurate this year’s Africa Week.

The Africa Week 2015 is taking place at the midst of a defining moment in the quest of Africa and the world for inclusive growth and sustainable development. Here, at the United Nations, world leaders adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with an ambitious set of sustainable development goals and now are moving towards a universal agreement on climate change in Paris in December 2015. This important milestone is backed up by the Addis Ababa Action

Agenda, adopted in July as a strong foundation to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

In all these processes, Africa's engagement, including through the Common African Position on the Post-2015 development agenda and the extensive efforts of Africans throughout the negotiating process, were instrumental in reaching these favourable outcomes.

As Africa embarks on the implementation of the AU Agenda 2063, it is gratifying to see that both the 2030 Agenda and the AU Agenda 2063 put people first, by placing poverty eradication and reducing inequalities at the centre of development efforts.

Indeed, many of the development priorities contained in Agenda 2063 are integrated in the global Agenda 2030, including key drivers for growth and prosperity such as agriculture development, industrialization and infrastructure

development, gender equality and women empowerment, peace and security, as well as addressing the effects of climate change.

This unity of purpose provides expansive opportunities to promote synergies and build complementarities between the two agendas, including in their mutually reinforcing implementation.

Translating these ambitious goals and targets into concrete results remains a challenge that requires the contributions of all actors. I commend the President of the General Assembly for selecting the theme: *“the implementation of commitments relating to sustainable development, climate change, and financing”* as the first high-level thematic debate during the 70th Session and commend the Secretary-General for energizing the whole United

Nations system to support member states' efforts to implement these commitments.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Over the years, progress on regional integration has been a critical catalyst for economic and social progress in Africa. The decision of the AU Summit in June 2015 to launch negotiations on the Continental Free Trade Area (CFTA) speaks to the resolve of African countries to achieve the Agenda 2063 first aspiration of “prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development”.

Fast-tracking the establishment of the Continental Free Trade Area will be facilitated by bold efforts of African governments to tackle main bottlenecks that continue to constrain regional integration. The implementation of NEPAD sectoral frameworks and the projects identified in the Dakar

Agenda for Action promise boosting infrastructure development and multiplying connectivity among African countries.

In all these efforts, Africa's regional and sub-regional organizations continue to provide much needed planning, support, and coordination. The recent signing of the SADC-EAC-COMESA Tripartite Free Trade Area embodied the crucial role of the Regional Economic Communities as the building blocks for Africa's integration. Moving ahead, regional and sub-regional organizations must redouble their efforts to support implementation, including through their role in monitoring and evaluation at the regional level.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Partnerships are indispensable for our success in implementing both the AU Agenda 2063 and the UN Agenda 2030. They are key to advancing progress in areas such as

resource mobilization, technology transfer and capacity building. We are pleased to see the growing partnership between the United Nations, the AU and the Regional Economic Communities in the implementation of both regional and global agendas.

This partnership is poised to reach new levels, including through the implementation of the Framework for a Renewed UN/AU Partnership on Africa's Integration and Development Agenda (PAIDA), as well as the innovative ways and means reflected in the recommendations that the Secretary-General has put forward in his report on the future of peace operations to institutionalize and further expand the UN-AU partnership.

As efforts to deepen this crucial partnership continue, the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, the Economic Commission for Africa and the Department of Public Information will spare no effort to further their collaboration

on mobilising international and regional support, and advocating for Africa's development priorities at the global and regional levels.

Now, I would like to invite the President of the 70th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, H.E. Mr. Mogens Lykketoft, to deliver his remarks.
