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Launching of the Africa-Turkey Women Entrepreneurs Trade Bridge



Istanbul, 28th February 2014: The Africa-Turkey Women Entrepreneurs Trade Bridge, opened officially today in Istanbul, Turkey, The Forum was co-chaired by Deputy Chairperson of the African Union Commission H.E. Mr. Erastus Mwencha and Mr, Rızanur Meral, President of the Confederation of Businessmen and Industrialists of Turkey (TUSKON),

Jointly organized by the African Union Commission (AUC) and TUSKON, the trade fair wills held over three days, from 28 February to 1st March 2014, The main objective of such continental event is mainly to support women entrepreneurs who intend to expand and/or innovate their activities, and to provide a platform for exchange of experiences and good practices as well as promote further integration of women entrepreneurs' networks in the two regions.

In his opening remarks, the Deputy Chairperson urged the African and Turkish business leaders for more concrete actions toward increasing the flow of trade and investment between Africa and Turkey so to impact positively on the living standards of the peoples from both sides.

Addressing the event, on behalf of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, the Deputy Chairperson emphasized that the Trade Fair as *“both timely and opportune as Africa have embarked on nurturing and developing its human resource, the most important resource of the continent”*. In particular, He highlights the increasing role of women in market and decision making positions in Africa.

Mr. Mwencha recalled the audience that Africa is becoming an increasingly attractive hub for foreign investors as a result of sound macro-economic policies, political and social reforms that the continent has been pursuing in the last decade, resulting in a much improved business environment conducive for foreign direct investment. *“Africa has put priority in developing critical social and physical infrastructure across the*



continent in order to reduce the cost of doing business” he added.

Citing potential sectors in Africa such as; agriculture and agro-industry, tourism; mining, infrastructure; fast moving consumer good, and ICT, the Deputy stresses that the *“continent’s potential is enormous and a continent on the rise“*. He expressed his confidence that more success stories will be shared during this very important trade bridge which will encourage and inspire Turkish investors to channel their resources in value adding industries in partnership with Africa investors. He also urged the African business to avail the opportunity of economic cooperation with Turkey, which is a gateway to the vast European market. (See the full speech of the Deputy Chairperson on Website :www.au.int)

Mr. Rizanur Meral, President of TUSKON, highlights in his introductory remarks insisted *“on the need of economies for more women entrepreneurs to grow at a desirable level, otherwise the potential welfare could not come up to surface“*.

Referring to 2063 goals of Africa Union, which draw a picture of wealth, prosperous and peaceful continent, he expressed the *“readiness of the Turkish business community to*

share its industrialization experience and know-how, in order to realize the goals of their friends and partners in Africa“. (See the full speech of the President of TUSKON on Website :www.au.int)

Convened within the framework of AU-Turkey Strategic Partnership, the Africa-Turkey Women Entrepreneurs Trade Bridge featured a number of activities, including; signing of MOU between African Union and TUSKON to enrich their cooperation, and bilateral meetings of different African and Turkish business entities.

Bringing together total of 806 participants, about 306 participants are from Africa and 500 participants from Turkey, the event will allow an opportunity to exchange experiences, discuss business and investment opportunities, strengthen women entrepreneurship and promote a better education and step in to the business life which will lead to further integration of women entrepreneurs' networks. It is designed to encourage partnerships, exchange best practices and attract investments in both regions. It will also be recorded that an important number of sales contracts have been concluded between the African and Turkish business women.

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