

**African Union - Executive Council**

**Forty-Third Ordinary Session**

**Statement by**

**Antonio Pedro**

**Acting Executive Secretary**

**United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA)**

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**Nairobi, Kenya**

**His Excellency Dr Alfred Mutua, Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Foreign and Diaspora Affairs of the Republic of Kenya,**

**His Excellency Mr Dhoahir Dhoulkamal, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Union of Comoros,**

**Her Excellency Dr Monique Nsanzabaganwa, Deputy Chairperson of African Union Commission,**

**His Excellency Mr Ahmed bin Abdulaziz Kattan, Former Minister of State, Advisor to the Royal Court of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia,**

Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates,

Colleagues,

Ladies and gentlemen,

I am honoured to join you all today at the 43rd Executive Council meeting of the African Union.

This is a significant event on our calendar as it offers an opportunity to all of us to reflect, reset, recalibrate and recommit to the goals of Africa's Agenda 2063.

This comes on the back of a number of important events, where Africa has spoken in a loud unified and strong voice, namely the *Conference on the Blue Economy and Climate Action in Africa: Island and Coastal States*, held in Moroni, Comoros, the *Summit for a New Global Financing Pact*, held in Paris, France, as well as the *2023 Caucus of African Governors of the World Bank and IMFAfrican*, held in Sal, Cape Verde.

Amidst the setbacks and challenges brought on by the global poly-crises, Africans have come together to find solutions and innovate, driven by the determination to save lives and livelihoods.

We must leverage that same spirit of solidarity, sense of urgency and resilience to embrace the opportunities before us to deliver on the promises of this critical Agenda.

Africa has already started leading the way for a renewed sense of common purpose as reflected in the outcomes of the African Union Summit on Industrialization and Economic Diversification, held in November 2022, in Niamey, Niger, which articulated a clear pathway to accelerate Africa's structural transformation with a potential to contribute an increased share of tradable goods in total exports, more productive and decent jobs, value addition, larger volumes of intra-African trade,

greater product complementarity between African economies and the emergence of strong and well-linked regional value chains, making near-shoring or Afri-shoring possible and breaking Africa's dependence on the export of raw materials.

The AfCFTA will serve as the catalyst for all of these step changes.

### **Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen**

The African continent has significant resources available to power a green and sustainable industrialization and make the AfCFTA work for Africa

First, for example, if we harness the full potential of the Congo River and build Inga III and IV, we will generate 70000 MW, which would benefit about 15 African countries.

These investments must therefore be prioritized and African MDBs should lead in crowding investments to make this a reality.

Money from our pensions funds and diaspora could complement this effort and SPVs should be created accordingly.

If realised this could be a game changer for infrastructure development, being the largest single source of untapped renewable energy globally, with about double the capacity of China's Three Gorges Dam; it would also enable interconnectivity between African nations and power Africa's industrialization agenda.

Second, with its battery minerals, the continent has a commanding opportunity to be a global leader in the electrification of transport systems and deployment of solar and wind energy, critical transitions to meet the world's zero targets. A key priority for our region, as exemplified by the Africa Mining Vision, is to ensure that our mineral resources contribute to endogenous growth.

As the world switches from coal and oil to wind turbines and solar panels, and trades internal combustion cars for electric vehicles, the demand for minerals such as cobalt, manganese, and platinum group minerals, will increase as much as four- to five-fold. Africa is a key supplier of these minerals, accounting for over half of the global supply, and stands to gain immensely from this demand.

To this end the development of the transboundary DRC-Zambia Special Economic Zone for the development of a battery and electric vehicles value chain could be a game changer, potentiating Africa's participation in a global market worth \$7.7 trillion by 2025 and \$46 trillion by 2050.

### **Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen**

The overall value of renewal energy market in 2020 was estimated at US 881.7 billion dollars and is projected to reach close to 2 trillion dollars by 2030.

With the demand for clean energy rising, it is time for Africa's renewable energy market to establish itself as a global player and attract increased global investment.

Just a 10 per cent share of this can easily add 200 billion dollars to Africa's economy.

Enabling infrastructure, strengthening productive capabilities and expanding exports and intra-African trade through the AfCFTA must be accompanied by effective industrialization and trade policies to stimulate private sector investments.

These investments will be critical to break the vicious cycle stemming from Africa's historical dependence on the export of natural resources.

Third, Africa's huge solar and wind energy potential must be harnessed. The continent has about 60% of the global solar energy, including in countries such as Chad and Niger. If fully harnessed, solar energy could position these countries to be major players in the livestock sector, especially in the meat and leather value chains, across the Sahel region, generating jobs and revenue.

Last, Africa's carbon credit market can offer an incredible opportunity to generate over \$50 billion a year in revenues for the continent's climate finance needs. The co-benefits to be reaped include the creation of new job opportunities; enhancing biodiversity and coastal ecosystems, and; contributing to environmental, social and economic sustainability while ensuring access to clean energy and water.

These are just few of the many opportunities the continent has to power its journey to claim Agenda 2030 and Agenda 2063 in Africa.

The United Nations Economic Commission for Africa and the entire UN family stand ready to provide its support to this strategic agenda under the leadership of the African Union Commission, and in close collaboration with the Regional Economic Commissions and other stakeholders, through an integrated, coherent, and transformational ecosystem for change, the reinvigorated AU-UN Regional Collaborative Platform being one of its key vehicles.

I thank you for your attention.