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The African Union Commission organized the 1st African Union Symposium on Special Economic Zones and Industrial Development.



Lusaka, Zambia – 7 November 2017. The Department of Trade and Industry of the African Union Commission is organizing the 1st African Union Symposium on Special Economic Zones (SEZs) and Industrial Development from 7 to 10 November 2017. The objective of the forum is to provide a platform for policy makers, practitioners, financial institutions, investors and academia to exchange views and experiences on how SEZs

can be utilized as vehicles for industrialization in African countries. Particular emphasis will be placed on environmental-friendly manufacturing SEZs promotion.

The transformation of African economies in order to create shared growth, decent jobs and economic opportunities for all is one of the priorities of the new vision of the continent, the Agenda 2063 which is the opportunity to undertake massive and bold industrialization of Africa.

The meeting is being attended by delegates from South Africa, Zambia, EAC, COMESA, ECOWAS, World Bank, Representative of China-Africa Development Fund and different experts on SEZs and Industrial parks.

In his Opening Remark, Mr. Hussein Hassan, Head of Industry division, Department of Trade and Industry, Highlighted the key aspect of the special economic zone which become an efficient economic policy tool to capture part of global manufacturing value addition. "The purpose of this forum, is to share experience on how these new vehicles for development operates and how they can support the overall development strategy of many African Union Member States who prioritized industrialization development to alleviate a tense labor market" said Mr. Hussein.

After welcoming the participant Mrs. Kayula Siame, Permanent secretary Ministry of Commerce, Trade and Industry of the Republic of Zambia informed the meeting that the government has set an ambitious Agenda aimed at bringing business environment and investment climate to international standards whilst remaining cognizant of the unique attributes of the country. "Government has also put in place a number of policy measures aimed at diversifying the economy and in particular up scaling the manufacturing sector towards higher value addition and upgrading capacity in the provision of related services. One of the programmes that Government has embarked on is enhancing the manufacturing sector with the emphasis on value addition through the development of multi facility economic zones and industrial parks" She added.

The meeting is expected to provide a better understanding of SEZs development challenge in Africa; Showcase African SEZ success stories and foster the exchange of lessons learned; Identify SEZ development and management needs of African Governments; Facilitate the exchange of experience among African SEZ developers and managers and interaction with their international counterparts and build the capacities of participants in implementing Green SEZs and related planning concepts such as Low-carbon Towns, Green Business Zones, Ecocity, Smart city and Eco-Industrial Parks.

The most important outcomes of this symposium will be a Policy Paper on SEZs Development in Africa and Action Plan for the creation of an African Platform of SEZs to strengthen the cooperation between African SEZs/ private sectors and policy makers and development partners.

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