

AFRICAN UNION

الاتحاد الأفريقي



UNION AFRICAINE

UNIÃO AFRICANA

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia P. O. Box 3243 Telephone: +251 11 551 7700 / +251 11 518 25 58/ Ext 2558

Website: www.au.int.

DIRECTORATE OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION

Press Release

The African Union Commission participates in the 2nd High-Level UN Conference on South-South Cooperation (BAPA + 40) in Buenos Aires, Argentina



21 March, 2019 – Buenos Aires, Argentina - A delegation from the AU Commission led by AU Commissioner for Trade and Industry, H.E. Albert M. Muchanga and AU Commissioner for Economic Affairs, H.E. Pr. Victor Harison, is participating in the 2nd High-Level UN Conference on South-South Cooperation (BAPA + 40), which takes place from 20 to the 22 of March 2019 in Buenos Aires, Argentina under the theme “*The role of South-South cooperation and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: Challenges and opportunities*”.

The Official opening was presided by H.E. Mr. Mauricio Macri, President of Argentina, in presence of the President of Uruguay, H.E. Mr. Tabaré Vázquez, and the UN Secretary General, H.E. Antonio Guterres as well as other Dignitaries. The President of Argentina reminded the Delegates that 40 years after the Buenos Plan of Action was adopted in Argentina in 1978, the issues and challenges that led to the said Plan remain relevant, although the context was different. In his statement, the UN Secretary General highlighted five key issues, which could be improved through South-South Cooperation: rising social inequalities, climate change, and infrastructure and power deficit, gender inequalities and support for multilateralism.

During the next two days, the delegates will review and adopt the Draft Outcomes Document, which will charter a new course for South-South cooperation over the next decades.

On the eve of the Official opening of the BAPA+40 Conference, on March 19, 2019, AU Commissioner for Trade and Industry, H.E. Albert M. Muchanga and AU Commissioner for Economic Affairs, H.E. Victor Harison shared the experience of the African Union in building and strengthening South-South Cooperation among African regional economic communities, during two side events: the first was the High Level Panel Session jointly organized by the Organization Internationale de la Francophonie (OIF) and the UN Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC), Regional Representation for Africa under the theme “*Enhancing South-South Cooperation through the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and Promotion of the interconnection of Francophone economic areas through South-South and tripartite cooperation.*” During this Session, Commissioner Muchanga highlighted that the AfCFTA opens new avenues for enhanced South-South Cooperation among between African regions as well as between Africa and other countries or regions of the South. Some of the areas of cooperation include conclusion of trade agreements with other regions of the South, the development of regional value chains for commodities such as cotton, as well as trade and investment promotion through events such as the Intra-African Trade Fair (IATF). In this regard, Commissioner Muchanga indicated that a number of countries from the South (China and Indonesia) had countries’ pavilion at the inaugural IATF in Cairo, Egypt, in December 2018 and several others where represented through their companies. He invited more countries from the South to attend the second edition, which will take place in August, 2020 in Kigali, Rwanda.

In his intervention, H.E. Prof. Victor Harison, AU Commissioner for Economic Affairs, highlighted one of the African Union's strategies for achieving Agenda 2063 goals is “productive transformation”. According to Prof. Harison, this would allow to (i) add value to unprocessed raw materials before export, (ii) create decent and productive jobs for the

growing youth on the continent, and (iii) ensure the integration of African economies into the global economy. He also invited partners from the South region for co-production, co-investment and joint-ventures, particularly in the sectors of agriculture and digital economy, recalling the natural resources and minerals available to the continent.

The second Session was organized by the Association of South East-Asian Nations (ASEAN), on the theme “*Shaping the Future of Regional South-South Cooperation: Sharing the ASEAN Experiences and Nurturing Synergies across Regions.*” During his intervention, Commissioner Muchanga highlighted that the AfCFTA opens new avenues for enhanced Cooperation between Africa and ASEAN. As Africa moves to set up AfCFTA institutions and implement the Agreement, ASEAN’s experience would be very useful.

On the sidelines, Commissioner Muchanga also held a bilateral meeting with Achim Steiner, the UNDP Administrator. He briefed him on the various programs that the AUC is implementing, including the progress in the AfCFTA process. On his part the UNDP Administrator commended the progress being made in Africa including on south –south Cooperation. He requested the Commissioner to convey to the AUC Chairperson, UNDPs commitment in supporting Africa’s women and youth programs including providing funding for the recruitment of 20 Women under the AUC Junior Professional Program, the AUC governance programs and as well as holding a retreat on the new role of the NEPAD-AUDA.

Commissioner Muchanga is also expected to participate in the Panel discussion on “South-South Cooperation for Economic Integration: UNCTAD’s Platform” on March 21, 2019, which will discuss opportunities that BRI could provide in facilitating knowledge sharing and policy experience exchange among developing countries.

Commissioner Harison is also expected to participate in the Panel discussions on “*Transition to sustainable development: New pathways for co-operation to fulfil Agenda 2030*” organized by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and “*Illicit financial flows and illicit trade in Africa*” jointly organized by UNCTAD and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

Commissioner Muchanga and Commissioner Harison are supported Mr. Jean Bertrand Azapmo, Regional Trade Adviser, Mr. Charles, Mr. Chiza Charles Newton Chiumya, Senior Trade policy officer, Mr. Mohamed El Alaoui, Officer, AU Permanent Mission to New York and Ms. Anais Georges, Special Assistant to AU Commissioner for Economic Affairs.

For further information, please contact Mr. Jean Bertrand Azapmo, Regional Trade Advisor Email: AzapmoJ@africa-union.org

Media contacts:

Patient Atcho, Department of Trade and Industry, Tel: + 251 929335250 - Email: atchop@africa-union.org and Esther Azaa Tankou, Directorate of Information and Communication, AUC Tel. +251 911361185, E-mail: yamboue@africa-union.org

Follow us:

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/AfricanUnionCommission>

Twitter: https://twitter.com/_AfricanUnion

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/AUCommission>