

## INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION DIRECTORATE

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### **AU Summit on Industrialization and Economic Diversification; a game-changer for Africa's development trajectory.**

Preparations for the African Union Summit on Industrialization and Economic Diversification have officially kicked off. Touted as a highly anticipated timely gathering, the Summit is expected to offer various opportunities to member states, regional organizations, the private sector including Medium and Small Scale enterprises and start-ups, and the development partners, to unlock the continent's potential to industrialize, particularly as the COVID-19 pandemic recovery action plans are being implemented and with the latest concerns on the impact of the Ukraine crisis on the African continent. The Summit's outcomes are expected to be action-oriented, to accelerate industrialization and Economic Diversification in Africa. Niger, the host country of the Summit to be convened during the Africa Industrialization Week from the 20 - 25 November 2022, will be among the beneficiaries of the Summit deliverables as plans are underway, to establish a Special Economic Zone in the country.

The African Union Summit on Industrialization and Economic Diversification makes great recognition of the fact that sustainable success on the Africa-Industrialisation front will only be achieved with deliberate efforts to integrate and systemically address Africa's underlying development features, such as the micro-small-medium enterprises and informal economy, the urban-rural transition, socio-economic diversity across the 55 AU member states, as well as linkages between education-skills

development and industry. Cross-cutting issues such as gender, climate change, energy security, youthful population and growing unemployment, will facilitate the evolution of a sustainable and inclusive industrialisation pathway for the continent.

In this regard, among the key elements of the outcome of the Summit will be anchored on upgrading skills by aligning education and vocational training with the actual needs of the labour market; mobilizing financial resources for Africa's structural transformation; building soft and hard infrastructure particularly focused on the energy sector for Africa's economic transformation; promoting commodity-based industrialization for inclusive growth and sustainable development; deepening continental economic integration; harnessing the opportunities offered by the Fourth Industrial Revolution; and establishing internal capabilities in Research and Development, among others.

To kick start the preparations of the Summit, the Government of the Republic of Niger and the African Union signed the Host Agreement detailing the plans for its convening. The Minister of Industry and Youth Entrepreneurship, H.E. Gourouza Salamatou, and the African Union Commissioner for Economic Development, Trade, Tourism, Industry and Minerals, H.E. Amb. Albert Muchanga, signed the Host Agreement in Niamey, Niger on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of April 2022. At the signing ceremony, both the Minister and the Commissioner underscored the urgency for the continent to enhance the development of industries to increase the impact of the existing sources of comparative advantage among member states and enhance Africa's global competitive position. Key to Africa promoting commodity-based industrialization will be the development of regional and continental value chains which calls for synergy at all levels, including the inclusion of the private sector.

Amb. Muchanga was leading the AU delegation on a three-day work visit to Niger, to discuss the preparations of the Summit with the Government of Niger and development partners. The African Union Commission is collaborating with AUDA-NEPAD; United Nations Industrial Development Organization; United Nations Economic Commission for Africa; Afro-Champions Initiative, African Development Bank; Afrexim Bank; African Business Council; and Islamic International Trade Finance Corporation; African Solidarity Fund, to organize the Summit.

During the visit, the African Union Commission held bilateral talks with various Ministers including, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, Mr Hassoumi Massoudou; the Minister of Mines, Mrs. Ousseini Hadizatou Yacouba; Minister of Finance, Mr. Ahmat Jihoud; Minister of Planning, Mr. Abdou Rabiou; Minister of Culture, Tourism and Handicrafts, Mr. Mohamed Hamid; and the Minister of Petroleum, Energy and Renewable Energies, Mr. Mahamane Sani Mahamadou. Discussions focused on enhancing the implementation of actions geared towards the realization of the development agenda as articulated in Africa's development Blueprint [Agenda 2063](#) and its [Flagship projects](#) for the continent to achieve sustainable and inclusive development. This is particularly necessary to address the economic pressure caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and the ongoing Ukraine crisis, both which have greatly disrupted key economic factors in the supply chains and the prices

of agricultural and energy products, leaving millions of African citizenry in socio-economic distress. Therefore, the need to implement strategic actions in policies such as the [Africa Mining Vision](#); the [African Continental Free Trade Area](#); the [Programme for Infrastructure Development](#); Financing of the Union; the [Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme](#), among others, will enable the African continent reduce poverty, create decent jobs for all including women and youth, and ultimately, lead to better livelihood for the citizenry.

The Ministers play a key role in moving this agenda forward at the various African Union policy formulation and implementation avenues such as the thematic [Specialised Technical Committees](#) (STCs) of the African Union. The AU [Summit on Industrialisation and Economic diversification](#) was initially set to be convened in 2021 but was postponed to 2022.

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