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AFRICA-SOUTH AMERICA FORUM OF COOPERATION
MINISTERIAL MEETING
21 FEBRUARY 2013
MALABO, EQUATORIAL GUINEA

STATEMENT BY H.E. MR. ERASTUS MWENCHA
DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION

Excellency Minister for Foreign Affairs of Equatorial Guinea

Honorable Ministers,

Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen

I feel greatly honored to be addressing this august body of Foreign Ministers of our two Regions, Africa and Union of South American Nations (UNASUR), gathered here in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, to lay foundation for the building of a strategic inter-regional cooperation.

At the very onset, allow me to convey our deepest appreciation to our host, the President of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea, **H.E. Mr. Theodoro OBIANG NGUEMA MBASOGO**, as well as the Government and the people of this beautiful country for their warm welcome and the facilities extended to us since our arrival. I also bring greetings from the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, H.E. Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, who for reasons beyond her control, is unable to be at this meeting, but will be joining us later.

You may recall that the Ministerial Session of Africa-South America Forum for Cooperation (ASACOF) convened here in November 2011 in preparation for the 3rd ASA Summit, which was postponed for today.

The outcomes of the above-mentioned meeting were translated into a Joint Communiqué, which paved the way for advancing the cooperation agenda through taking of certain actions, namely the

Implementation of **Africa-South America Action Plan 2013-2016**, setting up of the **Presidential Strategic Committee**, creating a **Working Group** mandated to carry out a study on the financing of the Permanent Secretariat, and initiating a process for the establishment of a Trust Fund for the implementation of projects.

That is why, partly, the 3rd ASA Summit, which was scheduled to take place in May 2012 did not convene as preparatory issues were still pending and/or unresolved. It is against this backdrop that a Meeting of the Africa-South America Coordination Mechanism at Ministerial Level was held on the 27th of September 2012, in New York, on the margins of the UN General Assembly.

In attendance, were, among others, Equatorial Guinea, as host of 3rd ASA, Venezuela as host country for the 2nd ASA Summit, Ecuador as President of the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) and of course the African Union Commission. This meeting gave a new impetus to the preparation process, which translated into the decision to hold this meeting here in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea at this time.

Your Excellencies, I wish to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the ASA Coordination Mechanism, the high officials in Addis Ababa, and the South American side who are working tirelessly to prepare all working documents for this meeting.

As you may be aware, the task ahead of us is threefold:

- 1) To agree on a Financing Mechanism;
- 2) Agree on the proposed implementation plan, and
- 3) Establish all ASA institutional mechanisms required for the financing of ASA project/programmes, as well as the proper functioning of our partnership.

To this end, consultations are still ongoing and we trust that a final document will be ready for your consideration and adoption later today.

At this juncton, allow me to contextualize the setting up of this partnership between our two regions. It is known to all of us that this partnership is taking place within the South-South Framework Cooperation and is underpinned by political solidarity and inspired by our shared historical background and common aspirations. The success of our common desire is translated into concrete projects to be realized and areas of mutual interests clearly defined to propel the partnership to greater heights for mutual benefit of our peoples of the two (2) Continents.

These areas of mutual interest include: improving trade and investment prospects between Africa and South America; education; energy & Infrastructure; agriculture, and to foster social justice, inclusive social policies by mainstreaming the effective participation of youths, civil society and gender groups. Both regions recognize the

need to join hands in fighting common challenges such as drug trafficking and human smuggling, terrorism in all its forms, piracy, mercenarism, and other transnational organized crime, in order to promote peace & security across the continents. Cooperation programmes in these areas are vital for the advancement of the broader development of Africa and South America.

From an economic standpoint, the rapid economic progression of both continents has, and will continue to significantly improved trade facilitation. With a combined GDP per Capita (nominal) of about \$10,600 in 2010 (compared with \$32,007 for North America and \$25,434 for Europe), both Africa and South America stand a better chance of increasing its bargaining power and attracting necessary investments. Through our commitment to a multilateral system and articulated policies, the South-South Cooperation has the potential of contributing significantly improving infrastructure, food security, the development of alternative sources of energy and increased use of renewable energy sources and hybrid energy technologies.

Your Excellencies, I am especially elated that this meeting is taking place in the helm of the 50th Anniversary celebrations of the African Union, formerly the Organization for African Unity. We believe this celebration offers an opportunity for both sides to work towards the objective of transformation, which we aspire for in the coming

decades. In this regards, ASA as our strategic partner and the Diaspora will play a major role, reflecting our shared background and close ties through their contributions for a better world by engendering peace and prosperity.

May I, on that note, thank the Honorable Ministers for coming to this important meeting and wish this session a successful outcome.

I thank you for your kind attention.