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## **Opening Remarks delivered**

**by**

**DCP  
African Union Commission**

**On the occasion of**

**Panel Discussion**

**Addis Ababa, Ethiopia  
24 July 2015**

**Commissioner, Trade & Industry**  
**Distinguished Principals and Participants,**  
**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It is my distinguished honor, on behalf of the African Union Commission to welcome you to this important event.

Tonight, I would just like to make three points. In the past, we have not attached importance this sector as it deserves. This is primarily because of a lack of knowledge and a lack of capacity. Science had made much progress in this sector and we have discovered a lot more that we cannot remain ignorant.

We have approached this with a silo mentality. Still a lot of that remains. The silo mentality persists because we tend to look at oceans from P& S viewpoint, Fisheries, Transportation, dumping ground for waste, as energy, tourism, and recreation...anything. If we are to succeed, we have to approach this sector from a synergistic point of view.

On this note, we would like to appreciate the work that has been done by Mr. Samuel Kame-Domguia, who has tenaciously worked hard to introduce the element of us all working together in the commission. Such partnerships can take many forms. We must continue to work together to establish and strengthen these partnerships across all the maritime sectors, not just in the security aspect. We look forward to jointly working with our international, government, non-government, and private sector partners, on possible areas for future cooperation and collaboration

Agenda 2063 also discussed the importance of the blue economy. We now have knowledge we can build on to move forward, with better synergies to manage the blue economy.

Third and last point is that Africa cannot do this alone. Through the ocean, we are neighbours to almost every continent. There has to be international cooperation in this vital sector. To work together to develop an orderly system for sustainable management and exploitation of the green economy for the benefit of all.

If you look in the past, this has not been the case. As Africa, we cannot continue in this manner. We need to change for the sake of our people, the generations to come, and for the sake of the entire humanity.

The AU is working towards the extraordinary Maritime Summit in Togo in November with focus on the specific steps we must take on the ground and at sea, at the continental, regional and national levels, to further our engagement to ensure that Africa can derive positive benefits from our work on maritime challenges and opportunities. We appeal to you all to collaborate with us on the implementation of the AIM-Strategy.

I also want to thank the ISS and SAMSA for their contribution to the organization of the Panel Discussion. We are grateful to all Moderators, Panelists and Resource Persons who have taken time to attend this discussion. We are also thankful to all the staff who put the arrangements together. They performed their duties with professionalism, and very importantly, always with a smile.

Excellencies, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, I thank you for your attention and I hope we all will have some fruitful hours to the benefit of the African Blue Economy.