

Opening statement of the AUC Commissioner at the AU-NEPAD Meeting on sustainable development

His Excellency the Minister of Sustainable Development and Environment of Republic of Congo, Minister Henri Djombo,

Mr Mounkaila Goumandakoye, Director and Regional Representative of the UNEP office for Africa

Mrs Sari Soderstrom, Sector Manager of the Environment Department and Sustainable Development Network of the World Bank

Mrs Estherine Lisinge-Fotabong, Director of programme Implementation and Coordination at the NEPAD Agency,

Distinguish participants

All protocol observed,

It is my pleasure to welcome all of you at this important side event organized by AU – NEPAD on Sustainable Development,

As you already know NEPAD's Vision and Agenda is in line with the objectives and principle espounded in Agenda 21.

NEPAD is a Framework developed by African leaders, based on a common vision and a firm and shared conviction, that they have a pressing duty to eradicate poverty and to place their countries, both individually and collectively, on a path of sustainable growth and development and, at the same time, to participate actively in the world economy and body politic.

Africa also has a major role to play in maintaining the strong link between human beings and the natural world. Technological developments tend to emphasise the role of human beings as a factor of production, competing for their place in the production process with their contemporary or future tools. The open uninhabited spaces, the flora and fauna, and the diverse animal species unique to Africa offer an opportunity for humanity to maintain its link with nature.

Africa has already made a significant contribution to world culture through literature, music, visual arts and other cultural forms, but its real potential remains untapped because of its limited integration into the global economy. The New Partnership for Africa's Development will enable Africa to increase its contribution to science, culture and technology and the economic development through a strong political leadership.

The key NEPAD programs are the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program, The Environmental Action Plan and PIDA the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa.

The NEPAD Secretariat has been transformed into the NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency and as such integrated into the process and structures of the African Union as per the African Union Summit Decision of the January 2012.

Our Objectives during the Rio + 20 negotiations is to ensure that the discussions and outcomes acknowledge and reflect The NEPAD Agenda as Africa's vision and Framework for sustainable development in Africa and that our partners commit themselves to support this framework in order to achieve this goal.

I thank you