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Statement

by

**Her Excellency Mrs. Rhoda Peace TUMUSIIME
Commissioner for Rural Economy and Agriculture
African Union Commission**

on

the occasion of the

**Ninth Session of the Committee on Sustainable Development and the
Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development**

17-18 June 2015

Addis Ababa

Ethiopia

H.E. Ato Sufian Ahmed Shide, State Minister of Finance and Economic Development of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

Chair of the Bureau

Honourable Ministers

Mr. Abdalla Hamdok, Deputy Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa

Dr. Fatima Denton, Director, Special Initiatives Division (SID), UNECA

Representative of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs

Representative of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

Representative of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

Representative of other United Nations Agencies

Representatives of the African Development Bank (AfDB)

Representatives of the Regional Economic Communities (RECs), Development Partners and the Civil Society Group here present

Members of the Diplomatic Corps

Eminent Experts

Members of the Media and Press

Distinguish participants

Ladies and gentlemen

It is indeed a great pleasure and an honour for me to address the dignitaries at the Ninth Session of the Commission on Sustainable Development and Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development. On behalf of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Dr Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma and indeed on my own behalf, I take this opportunity to express my gratitude to the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa specifically the Special Initiative Division for organizing this important event.

2. Let me also extend my gratitude to the United Nations Special Agencies, UNEP, UNDP, the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the African Development Bank.

Excellencies,

3. As you may recall, in 2012, during the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, commonly known as the Rio+20, important Decisions to strengthen the institutional framework for sustainable development at all levels were adopted. “The future we want” our final document, foster to ensure effective monitoring and implementation of sustainable development commitments at the global level. Our meeting

today and for the next two days will provide a platform for the African Region to prepare for the United Nations Summit for the adoption of the post-2015 Development Agenda that will be held from 25 to 27 September 2015, in New York and convened as a High-level Plenary meeting of the General Assembly. Specifically, this Addis Ababa meeting will review and provide guidance for the continent to deliberate on innovations, technologies and management of our natural resources for sustainable development. It also provides a forum for Africa's collective input to the High Level Political Forum 2015 in preparation for the adoption of the expected Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Our meeting today further serve as a great opportunity to deliberate on our region's expectations and priorities with regard to the effective implementation of some key Rio+20 outcomes.

Excellencies,

4. The African Heads of State and Government accorded due recognition to the important issues of Sustainable Development and have accordingly in 2014; endorsed the Common African Position (CAP) on Post-2015 Development Agenda. The document focuses on 6 pillars as follow:

- (1) The Structural economic transformation and inclusive growth, with a big emphasis on sustainable agriculture, food self-sufficiency and nutrition.
- (2) Science, technology and innovation to enhance technological capacities of people.
- (3) People centred development to eradicate poverty.
- (4) Environment, Natural resources management and disaster risk management with appropriate response to climate change.
- (5) Peace and security to prevent armed conflicts; and
- (6) Finance and partnerships to mobilize domestic resource and innovative finance.

Excellencies,

5. Permit me to highlight that on Climate Change, the Common African Position urges Developed countries Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) to fully implement their commitments under the Convention and the Kyoto Protocol in order to bridge the gap between the aggregate efforts of mitigation pledges and aggregate emission pathways consistent with the objective of holding global average temperature rise to below 2 degrees or 1.5 degrees above pre-industrial levels.

6. The African Union calls upon Developed countries to provide sufficient and predictable financing to Developing countries, mainly through effective use of the Green Climate Fund, for Adaptation as well as the transfer of technologies and capacity building;

Excellencies, Distinguished Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen,

7. I have no doubt that this forum would provide useful guidelines on addressing the future challenges of sustainable development including the achievement of necessary transformation, creating the jobs and employments that our young people need; and increased participation in the global trade value chain. To achieve these aspirations, we need to focus on the following among others:

(1) On Agriculture; the African continent is currently home to 60% of the world's total uncultivated, arable land. As the world's population increases rapidly (recently exceeding the 7 billion mark and projected 9 billion in 2050), global agricultural production must rise to feed these growing numbers. This creates business opportunities for manufacturing and marketing of products such as fertilizers, pesticides and seeds as well as a demand for food processing and agro-processing such as grain refining,

value addition and packaging. Value chain opportunities exist in textile industry and on commodities such as tea, and coffee just to name a few. "In fact Africa is now ready to be the next hub of textile production. The growth in agro-industry has been buttressed by improved business environment through implementation of programmes such as the Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP).

(2) On the mining sector, several African countries have vast deposits of mineral resources that have been left largely unexploited because of lack of technical know-how, as well as the financial incapacity to embark on capital-intensive mining projects. The continent also has a wide array of mineral resources, which include iron ores, coal, bauxite, gold, tin, lead, oil and zinc that are yet to be exploited. This creates an investment opportunity for our Entrepreneurs and Development Partners without compromising Africa's chance to benefit from value addition and wealth creation opportunities in both artisanal as well as industrial mining.

8. All these transformations in Africa require new economic paradigms that would include development and implementation of Green Economy and Blue Economy policies in our dear continent. It is a known fact that Africa is blessed with abundant natural resources to create new jobs and news

opportunities to transform our economies, so let us all rise up to overcome the challenges for the sustainable development of mother Africa.

Excellencies, Distinguished Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen,

9. Allow me as I end my statement speech, to briefly state that I am confident that this Forum will facilitate constructive discussions on how to better use this platform to address the contemporary challenges on Sustainable Development. I further wish to reassure you of the commitment of the African Union Commission under the able leadership of the H.E. Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, Chairperson and my personal commitment to support the processes and paths of the African continent on sustainable development and poverty alleviation.

I wish you fruitful deliberations and look forward to the successful outcomes of this Forum.

Thank you for your kind attention.

Merci, Machías Gracias, Asante sana, Obrigada and Amaseginalew!