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## **Opening Statement**

**Delivered by**

**H. E. Mrs. Fatima Haram Acyl**

**Commissioner for Trade and Industry**

**African Union Commission**

**On the occasion of the 4<sup>th</sup> AUC – PAQI Strategic Meeting**

**ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA**

**29 September 2014**

**Distinguished Participants from PAQI**

**All AUC Participants**

**Ladies and Gentlemen**

It is a great pleasure and honor for me to welcome you all to the 4th AUC – PAQI Strategic Meeting following the successful hosting here in Addis Ababa of the 3rd meeting earlier in March this year. On the conclusion of the meeting held in March, Dr. Hermogene and his team debriefed me specifically on the agreement between our organizations to plan jointly for the period 2015 – 2017. Indeed, the timing of our meeting today is ideal as we look ahead to the future. We already have our AUC Strategic Plan for 2014 – 2017 and PAQI can help deliver on some of our key flagship projects including our work on the Continental Free Trade

Area (CFTA) and the Agenda 2063. Indeed, the importance of quality infrastructure in the economic development of the continent cannot be understated. I trust we all agree - poorly designed technical regulations and standards limit consumer choice and hamper trade yet so many studies clearly show our traders face huge challenges in this regard. Technical regulations and standards challenges form a great share of both reported and unreported non-tariff barriers to trade in Africa.

**Dear Participants,** to give some background to our relationship with PAQI - Let me take this opportunity to inform the meeting that PAQI was officially launched in August 2013 by the AUC Director of Trade and Industry following the signing of a PAQI MOU by ARSO, AFRIMETS, AFSEC, and AFRAC with the support of the

AUC. PAQI pillars are already recognized by the relevant international organizations in their respective fields of operation.

PAQI organizations participated in our Stakeholders Retreat held in Johannesburg, South Africa, in February this year where we discussed and developed Joint work streams on areas of potential strategic partnerships and delivery. ARSO also invited us to their 20th Annual General Assembly Meeting held in June 2014 in Kigali organized by the Government of the Republic of Rwanda, through Rwanda Bureau of Standards, on 23rd – 27th June 2014 under the theme **“Standardization as a driver for Improving Africa’s Competitiveness”**. We also met and participated in a working visit to UNIDO in July this year where we discussed issues affecting industrialization on

the continent. Indeed, we have a very good history of cooperation and working together, **we can only strengthen this moving forward.**

**Colleagues, ladies and gentlemen,** allow me to make a special mention of our Department's sincere appreciation and gratitude to the invaluable support given by the German government through the German Federal Metrology institute (PTB) and the PAQI Secretariat in making this meeting a success. We are indebted to their generous support for bringing key experts from their respective base countries to the African Union Commission, here in Addis Ababa. I am also told PTB has made it possible that we will indeed have coffee and lunch. Indeed, we are grateful for this.

Turning to the purpose of our meeting today, I wish to reiterate that the meeting today is testimony to the common and shared vision our organizations have for a more integrated Africa that can produce goods and services, feed its own people, generate jobs for its growing young people and maintain healthy populations and safe workplaces. One key outcome of this meeting is the Joint strategic plan between PAQI organizations and the AUC Departments. This plan will be accompanied by a clear implementation matrix that outlines timely and tangible realistic deliverables and results with dedicated roles and responsibilities amongst our organizations.

I can inform that the DTI has secured some resources from the EU towards standards issues in our 2015 Budget. We appreciate this support and our engagement with our sister

Departments and PAQI will even make it better. Our earlier engagements on the possibility of PAQI assisting mobilize technical assistance support for the DTI's Industry division; particularly on matters relating to Standards have seen some positive developments. I am very happy to inform that this visit by PAQI is also meant to introduce and familiarize the proposed Expert Ms. Evah Oduor to the AUC family. We are again greatly delighted to add to our staff a very experienced and knowledgeable woman and we hope that she will contribute immensely to our work both at the Departmental and AUC levels.

Quality infrastructure is cross cutting and hence the reason we have a broad representation here by our Sister Departments from the AUC. This is crucial in our joint planning, reporting, monitoring and evaluation processes.

It is my sincere hope that based on their Comparative Competencies, PAQI institutions will align their work programmes and activities in line with the key AUC sectors which are: Agriculture, infrastructure, transport, energy, environments, natural resources, health, trade and Industry sectors. I am aware that in the proposed implementation matrix, PAQI assigned its activities to some AUC programmes such as BIAT/CFTA, AIDA, CAADP, PIDA and PMPA which are programmes that need great support for the development of Africa.

Our partnership in making this joint planning more visible and effective should see us building capacity in our Member States and RECs through sensitization, training, working with the private sector, partnerships with education



institutions for curriculum review and research institutes and laboratories. I would also encourage that we work closely with ARSO on their African Trade Portal as we also have started work on establishing the AU Trade Observatory as part of the CFTA Architecture. We would also like to see a scaling up of innovative initiatives like ARSO's Standards Awards, among others.

The political support towards quality infrastructure is there. In this regard, the CAMI 20, the Conference of African Ministers of Industry held in June 2013 in Nairobi, Kenya, made a declaration on quality infrastructure, recognizing the Pan-African Quality Infrastructure (PAQI) as the continental platform for all matters related to standardization, metrology, and accreditation in order to strengthen the competitiveness of Africa's goods and

services and contribute towards the industrialization of the continent and its sustainability.

In conclusion, Ladies and Gentlemen, the newly developed PAQI structure, as the latest addition to the AU family is underlined by a shared objective to improve quality in Africa, increase regional integration as well as promote and enhance intra-Africa trade for our Small and Medium Enterprises through establishing a harmonized policy on standardization and quality assurance on goods and services on the continent. This will generate jobs, incomes and livelihoods for our people. Therefore, planning together, we will succeed.

I wish you all fruitful deliberations and I thank you for your kind attention.

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