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STATEMENT BY

**H.E. DR. MAXWELL M. MKWEZALAMBA
COMMISSIONER FOR ECONOMIC AFFAIRS
AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION**

AT THE

**2nd India-Africa Trade Ministers' Meeting
New Delhi, India
17th March, 2012**

Honourable Anand Sharma, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Textiles, India

Honourable African Ministers of Trade

Excellencies Ambassadors here present

Co-Chairs of the India-Africa Business Council – Mr. Wilson Atta Krofah, representing Mr Alhaji Aliko DANGOTE, President / CEO, the founder of the Dangote Group; and Mr. Sunil Bharti Mittal the Founder, Chairman and Group CEO of Bharti Enterprises

Public and Private Sector representatives

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen

On behalf of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, H.E. Dr. Jean Ping, and indeed on my own behalf, I wish to express sincere gratitude and appreciation to all of you who, in one way or the other, have contributed to the successful organization of this second India-Africa Trade Ministers Meeting. I wish to particularly thank the Government and the People of India for facilitating the organization of the meeting and ensuring our comfortable stay here in New Delhi.

In this regard, please allow me to acknowledge the significant and important roles played by Honourable Shri Anand Sharma, Minister of Commerce and Industry and Textiles of the Government of India, and his competent team at the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and Textiles; the various Government of India's Ministries and Departments; and the Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry, as well as the private sector actors, here present. I also take this opportunity to thank all the African Ministers of Trade, here present, for finding time within your very busy schedules to attend this important meeting. This is indeed a manifestation of the importance you attach to this event.

I am confident that this 2nd India-Africa Trade Ministers' Meeting, which is a follow up to the First India-Africa Trade Ministers meeting that was held on the occasion of the Second Africa-India Forum Summit 2011 held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, will further strengthen and deepen the strategic economic relations between India and Africa. This is evident from the rich and comprehensive agenda of this Meeting, whose items include "Review of the Progress in Implementation of the Decisions taken by the First India-Africa Trade Ministers' Meeting", "Review of Progress in Setting-Up Pan-African Institutions as per the Decisions of the First and Second India-Africa Forum Summit", "Investment Relations between India and Africa and Measures for Further Strengthening these Relations"; "Business to Business Cooperation between the Business Communities of India and Africa", and "Exchange of Views on the Global Economic Situation and the Macro-Economic Policies of India and Africa". This meeting, therefore, presents great opportunities for the mutual benefit of India and Africa. The Meeting also helps us to follow-up on implementation of the Joint Statement that was issued by the First India-Africa Trade Ministers' Meeting held on May 21, 2011 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Excellencies

Private sector actors

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen

I am pleased to report that we have made significant strides since the holding of the First India-Africa Trade Ministers' Meeting. Of importance in our quest to strengthen trade and investment linkages between India and Africa is the launch today of the India-Africa Business Council. The India-Africa Business Council will, among others, support efforts aimed at strengthening and deepening economic ties between business communities of India and Africa and facilitate a consultative process to address issues that impede economic and commercial relations between India and Africa. The African Union Commission wishes to underscore its commitment to ensuring an effective functioning of the Council. In this regard, in identifying members from Africa, we have been mindful of the need

to have a functioning Council. This has also guided the appointment of Mr. Alhaji Aliko Dangote, a distinguished businessman in Africa, as Co-Chair of the Council. It is pleasing to note that on the Indian side, Mr. Sunil Bharti Mittal, who does not need any introduction, has been designated to Co-Chair the Council. I invite the Ministers of Trade to support the activities of the Council to ensure that it delivers on its mandates.

The First Africa-India Trade Ministers' Meeting noted "the huge market of India comprising about 2.2 billion people and with a combined gross domestic product of more than US\$ 3 trillion in 2009". In order for this to be a reality, there is need to accelerate market integration in Africa and between India and Africa. We, therefore, commend the commitment by India to the implementation of the Duty Free Tariff Preference (DFTP) Scheme for the Least Developed Countries (LDCs), the majority of whom are in Africa.

On the African side, we continue to implement measures aimed at accelerating the pace of market integration. Indeed, the Meeting may recall that the 18TH Africa Union Summit that was held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in January/February this year had as its theme "Boosting Intra-Africa Trade", recognizing that the promotion of intra-African trade is a fundamental factor for sustainable economic development, employment generation and effective integration of Africa into the global economy. The Summit considered a Framework, Road Map and Architecture for Fast Tracking the establishment of a Continental Free Trade Area (CFTA) and an Action Plan for Boosting Intra-African Trade. Other efforts aimed at accelerating Africa's integration efforts include the development and adoption of an Action Plan for the implementation of the Continent's Minimum Integration Plan, undertaking measures to mobilize domestic resources for the implementation of African Union's flagship projects in sectors such as agriculture and food security; infrastructure and energy; trade and industry; and education, science and technology. Among the efforts at the regional economic community (REC) level include the Tripartite Agreement to create a Grand Free Trade Area among the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the

East African Community (EAC), and the Southern Africa Development Community.

Africa, with a population of one billion people, rich in natural resources, endowed with an enterprising and youthful population, holds a lot of promise. In this regard, although the public sector must continue to serve the interest of Africa's population, the realization of the aspirations of the continent's citizenry can only be ensured through partnership with the private sector. This realization is clearly demonstrated by the significant strides being taken by governments across the continent to create the enabling environment for business activity. Interventions vary from one country to the other and in many cases, reforms encompass elimination of bureaucracy, strengthening of institutions, protection of property rights, improved macroeconomic management and strengthening of legal systems. The role played by the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), a self assessment mechanism, in promoting good governance cannot be over-emphasized. To date, around thirty (30) African Union Member States have signed on to the APRM.

While noting the progress made, we also realize that the gains made are likely to be negatively affected upon by the current global economic challenges, including the Euro-zone debt crisis, rising food prices and commodity price volatility, rising fuel prices, and the impact of climate change. Within the spirit of our Partnership, India and Africa will need to continue working together in addressing these global economic challenges. We also note with concern the fact that Doha Development Round Negotiations have stalled. Within the G20, there has been commitment to conclude the Doha successfully and with development outcomes. This commitment, however, has just remained on paper. India and Africa need to work together in "unblocking" the current impulse, particularly within the G20 framework. We need to build on the excellent collaboration between India and Africa within the G20 in addressing this issue. I invite this Second India-Africa Trade Ministers' Meeting to examine this important subject matter and make submissions through our relevant delegations to the next G20 Summit to be held in Mexico.

Excellencies

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen

Please allow me to conclude by expressing the African Union's unwavering commitment to and support for the holding of the India-Africa Trade Ministers' Meeting. The African Union Commission commends the Ministers' resolve to meet on yearly basis, in India and Africa. We remain convinced that this Meeting will go a long way to enhancing India-Africa Partnership and contribute positively to promoting sustainable economic growth and development, poverty reduction and attainment of the Millennium Development Goals.

I wish the Second India-Africa Trade Ministers' Meeting fruitful and successful deliberations.

I thank you for your kind attention!