

AFRICAN UNION

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Creating One African Market

**Remarks by Ambassador Albert M.
Muchanga, Commissioner Trade and
Development Made at the Launch of 2017
Trade and Development Report Held at
the African Union Headquarters on 14th
September, 2017**

We thank you, Dr. Joy Kategekwa, Regional Director of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and your colleagues for inviting us to the launch of the 2017 Trade and Development Report, one of your flagship publications.

We warmly congratulate you for this publication.

UNCTAD, along with the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) is a technical partner to the Department of Trade and Industry of the African Union Commission.

Our participation is, in this connection, a contribution to the on-going collaboration between our two organizations.

Just yesterday, the African Union Commission Deputy Chairperson, His Excellency Ambassador Thomas Kwesi Quartey participated in a high level panel discussion, moderated by the UNCTAD Secretary General, Dr. Mukhisa Kituyi on **Accelerating Progress in Building Productive Capacities in Least Developed Countries and other Vulnerable Developing Economies.**

UNCTAD is a thought leader on matters of trade and development. Your 2017 Trade and Development Report contributes greatly to the development of the body of knowledge on these critical issues.

As usual, you do not disappoint. You provoke us to think possibilities of a better future for the world economy and humanity.

The messages are clear. There are several but I will highlight just a few:

- The world economy still requires stronger growth but that is so far not forthcoming, and with that slow progress, inequality, within countries and across countries is increasing. We have heard you loud and clear;
- The world still faces complex barriers to promoting broad-based inclusion in the development process. For many people and countries, the ladder of development is increasingly becoming difficult to climb as a result of those barriers. In some countries, women are facing the brunt of

exclusion from employment on account of job rationing.

Again, we have heard you loud and clear;

- The Fourth Industrial Revolution is bringing to the fore, robotics as a fact of industrialization, with grave implications for developing countries whose most pressing challenge is to create decent jobs as stepping stones out of poverty for many of their people. The Report assures developing countries not to worry too much about robotics. Again, we absolve your message with clarity.

The Report also tackles the issues of contributions of trade and development to the realization of the 2030 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. While welcoming this message, we would also like to state that, for us in Africa, talk of the UNSDGs is also talk of the African Union Agenda 2063.

The two are aligned and have a single template for reporting progress on their implementation.

We have also received your message on the agenda for action or global new agenda for the 21st Century anchored on global economic recovery, reform and redistribution. We are not too hopeful here. This is because the key players in the global economy are either not sending out clear messages on the future direction of the global economy or promising us isolationism.

With some aspects of globalization in retreat; with some commentators and economists already coming up with the term ‘physical de-globalization’ to describe this trend, we have a huge task ahead in creating a new global deal for the 21st Century.

For us in Africa, we welcome initiatives to create a fairer and inclusive world order. But we are in the meantime, going ahead in creating our own future. We are, inter-alia, harnessing our demography as a source competitiveness by investing in our youth since Africa has the youngest population.

We are also establishing the CFTA to spur investment, structural transformation, trade, innovation and productivity.

Let me stress, we are open to participating in the implementation of the proposed agenda for action.

I would like to conclude by saying that since you are a regional office covering the whole of Africa, and with resources permitting, consider launches in other African countries in future, as a way of bringing UNCTAD closer to Africa.

Once again, congratulations for the good and insightful report.