

AFRICAN UNION

الاتحاد الأفريقي



UNION AFRICAINE

UNIÃO AFRICANA

Addis Ababa, ETHIOPIA P. O. Box 3243 Telephone: 011-551 7700 Fax: 011-551  
7844  
website: [www.africa-union.org](http://www.africa-union.org)



**Creating One African Market**

**Welcoming Remarks by Ambassador Albert M.  
Muchanga, Commissioner for Trade and  
Industry Delivered at the Special Meeting of  
African Union Ministers of Trade Held at the  
African Union Headquarters on 18<sup>th</sup>  
September, 2017  
to Prepare for the World Trade Organization  
Eleventh Ministerial Conference**

**Mr. Chairman,**

**Honourable Ministers,**

**Your Excellencies Ambassadors and Permanent Representatives,**

**Distinguished Delegates,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen.**

We have a busy day ahead of us.

I will, therefore, make very brief welcoming remarks.

I warmly welcome each and every one of you to this special meeting convened in our on-going preparations for the 11<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization to be held in Buenos Aires, Argentina this year.

I extend greetings from the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, His Excellency Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat.

A special welcome to Her Excellency, Mrs. Susana Malcorra, Minister and Chairperson of the 11<sup>th</sup> WTO Ministerial Conference.

Your Excellency, you are among friends, brothers and sisters,  
Feel at home.

As you will discover during your interactions with the Honourable Ministers, Africa will fully support your leadership of the Eleventh WTO Ministerial Conference.

May I also make five equally brief points.

The first one is to record my appreciation to the Government of the Republic of South Africa for co-sponsoring this special meeting.

We greatly value your contribution. Ubuntu in action. We are most grateful.

The second point is to also record my appreciation to the African Group of Ambassadors to the WTO and senior officials for the excellent work that they have done to prepare for this meeting.

I was with them in Geneva in July this year and worked with them as they considered and adopted the working documents for this meeting.

I highly appreciated their dedication to duty and still do.

The good results of their work speak for their diligence and professionalism.

The Ambassadors and senior officials are here to provide the necessary technical inputs into your deliberations.

I am certain their preparatory work and presence will greatly facilitate your decision making today.

The third point, a matter for the future but has been with us for a long time, is the need for the African Union to have observer status in the World Trade Organization.

We know where the problem lies.

Our hope is that this matter can be resolved in the not-too-distant future.

I make the point for your continued reflection after this meeting.

The fourth point is that Africa works under the principle of speaking with one voice and acting in unison.

We must emerge from this meeting with a strong reaffirmation of that principle.

The Draft Ministerial Declaration before you, is an input into Africa speaking with one voice.

More importantly, we should all commit to speaking with one voice during the Eleventh WTO Ministerial Conference in Argentina.

The fifth and final point is that we are a third of the WTO membership. In this respect, the rest of the world will closely watch our deliberations and assess our outcomes today.

We must welcome this scrutiny.

At the end of the day, what is important is that we must use our collective strength in numbers to become key interlocutors in the upcoming negotiations, while also safeguarding our collective interests in the negotiations.

I promised to be brief.

I have kept the promise.

Once again, you are all most welcome.

I look forward to fruitful deliberations.

I thank you all for your kind attention.