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## **OPENING STATEMENT**

**BY**

**DR. MADUEKE, LEVI UCHE**

**HEAD OF AFRICAN UNION STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS**

**AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION**

**AT THE**

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**2<sup>ND</sup> ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE AFRICAN UNION  
PARTNERSHIP COORDINATION AND INTERACTIVE  
PLATFORM (AU-PCIP)**

**20 - 22 NOVEMBER 2018**

**ACCRA, GHANA**

**Excellency, Mr Charles Owiredu, Honourable Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration, of the Republic of Ghana,**

**Excellency, Mr Bakary Kone, Deputy to the Executive Secretary of the African Capacity Building Foundation,**

**Excellencies, members of the African Diplomatic Corps, resident in Ghana,**

**Excellency, Dr. Eddy Maloka, President of the African Peer Review Mechanism,**

**Excellencies, Representatives of the Regional Economic Communities (RECs),**

**Excellency, Mr Michael Kottoh, Chief Strategist, Executive Committee of the Afrochampions Initiative,**

**Excellency, Dr. Ghenna Kebour, President of the Pan African Chamber of Commerce and Industry,**

**Excellency, Representative of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP),**

**Excellencies, Representatives of Regional Chambers of Commerce from the five Regions of Africa,**

**Distinguished Representatives of the Private Sector from the five regions of Africa, the Academia, the Civil Society Organizations and the Diaspora,**

**Our Special Guests, Dr Nelson Sechere, an independent Resource Mobilization Expert, and Mr & Mrs John Kuipers, President and Founder of PyrOil,**

**Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen**

It is with the permission and clear instructions of His Excellency Dr. Moussa Faki Mahamat, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission that I stand before you at this gathering of African stakeholders involved in driving Africa's Strategic Partnerships.

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you all to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Conference of the African Union Partnerships Coordination and Interactive Platform holding today in the beautiful city of Accra, Ghana.

I want to recognize and appreciate the **African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF)** – a Specialized Agency of the African Union for co-organizing this Conference with the African Union Commission.

Please allow me to express my gratitude to the Government and people of the Republic of Ghana for the warm welcome and support extended to us since our arrival. I specially want to say thank you to His Excellency Charles Owiredu, the Honourable Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration of

the Republic of Ghana for finding it important to be present at the Opening Session of this Conference.

The presence of the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs no doubt, showcases the understanding the Government of Ghana has of the new dynamics of change taking place at the African Union, as the Union takes a bold step towards reforming the way it does business in order to make Africa stronger and give the African citizens the opportunity to embrace the future they deserve. Such understanding is of course not new within the context of strategic and far reaching leadership role and strength of mobilization of a peoples' will to believe in themselves and drive their own destinies.

This fact could be substantiated by the inspiration and motivation found in the man with characteristics-extraordinaire: The legend; Dr Kwame Nkrumah of Africa.

The Great Nkrumah stated and I quote:

“The forces that unite us are intrinsic and greater than the superimposed influences that keep us apart”. The reality today

is that we as Africans must stand by who we are; what we represent; define what we want and together work towards realizing the Africa We Want.

### **Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

My Statement this morning anchors on the need to provide answers to the following questions:

1. What does Africa want from Partners, and
2. What do Partners want from Africa?

Before attempting to provide answers to the above questions, permit me to inform on the reason why we are here today.

We are here today to follow-up on the outcome of the inaugural Conference of the African Stakeholders involved in driving Africa's Strategic Partnerships that was held in Harare, Zimbabwe in December 2017.

That Conference established the African Union Partnerships Coordination and Interactive Platform (AU-PCIP) and called for the creation of a digital mechanism known as the Partnerships

Management Information System (PMIS) to address the challenges related to the mobilization of collective thoughts, and of dispersed and indigenous knowledge to drive Africa's partnerships in order to develop concrete and focused programmes/ projects from across the wider African stakeholders, promote synergy building and coordination in forging greater coherence amongst AU stakeholders, as well as foster an atmosphere of information and knowledge sharing, in the pursuit of a collective drive for African development, which will ultimately lead to true strategic partnerships with the other parts of the world.

### **Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen**

One of the quickest ways to fast-track development in Africa centers on aggressive pursuit for growth, driven primarily by the development of export-oriented industries propelled by industrialization together with the development of highly skilled and educated labour, investing in African women and youth, and fostered by a strong support in the form of undiluted continental political will.

While Africa is on an upward trend and reserves the right to develop its capacity and the resources to finance its development, the continent desires mutually beneficial relations and partnerships with other regions, continents and institutions with a view to enhancing the benefits of its transformation and integration efforts. We need to emphasize the need to turn the continent into a ground that generates; processes; promotes intra African trade and exports goods to the other parts of the world. This way, Africa would be in a better position to strike better deals and more importantly determine what comes in and what goes out of the continent.

Africa is one of the world's fastest growing regions and offers greater opportunities for investment with guaranteed returns. Today, emerging markets in Africa are at the top of global growth projections, and it is believed that it would continue on this trajectory in the coming years.

Africa is also the continent of the future, which offers significant opportunities for trade and investment in various sectors

including mining, tourism, agricultural development and agribusiness, telecommunication, renewable energy development, infrastructure development, maritime and air transport, as well as a potential market estimated to more than one billion people. This statistics, is made even more remarkable as 60% of Africa's population is under the age of 25.

In this same light, African Union Agenda 2063 has brought a new wind of change across our beautiful and well-endowed continent, setting the growth and development path for the next few decades.

Africa is ready and inviting the world to take advantage of current investment opportunities within the vast expanse of the continent.

It is believed that for Africa to achieve its development and integration agenda, as enshrined in the AU Agenda 2063, it needs to engage constructively with all its stakeholders, both continental and global, to become an *integrated, prosperous*



*and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens, and representing a dynamic force in the international arena.*

This is where collaborative and strategic partnerships play a dynamic role for impact and mutual benefit. The boundaries of possibilities are remarkably enlarged when partners pull together their collaborative strength and efforts to attain a mutual goal. The socio-economic development across Africa hinges solidly on the strength of the partnerships that have been established over the years, and the ones to come.

### **Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen**

It is important to note that the cooperation between Africa and its partners has mainly been on a donor-recipient driven relationship that is skewed in favor of the donors. However, the African Union has introduced a new dynamic to Africa's engagement with partners as there is a premium placed on partnerships that are based on multilateral dimension, without diminishing the importance of bilateral engagements between our individual Member States and their Partners.

Therefore, within the context of the above exigencies with respect to engaging in Strategic Partnerships with the other parts of the world, Africa wants a relationship that will be capable of promoting delivery of superior value to the continent as it embarks on the implementation of the AU Agenda 2063.

Africa wants to engage in Partnerships that will be based on equality, accountability, mutual respect, efficiency, ownership and win-win cooperation.

Africa needs the support of its Partners to promote economic transformation of the continent through robust industrialization; promote resilient health system and, as well promote social stability within the continent.

Africa needs the support of its Partners to build requisite and necessary skills that could strengthen the continents technological capabilities.

Africa needs the support of its Partners to put an end to Illicit Financial Flows from the shores of the continent.

From the foregoing, it is clear that Africa knows what it wants from its partners; but do we know what partners want from Africa? We will leave the answer to this question in your hands.

### **Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

To achieve all these, we need to speak with one voice and mobilize collective thoughts to ensure focus and avoid duplication and overlap.

Africa must be able to put its thoughts together in an inclusive manner after engaging with all internal stakeholders working with Africa's Strategic and Traditional Partners at different levels.

There is urgent need for the African Union stakeholders: namely; the African Union Commission, the other AU Organs,

the Regional Economic Communities (RECs), Private Sector, AU Specialized Agencies, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), and the Academia, to come together and forge a common front in order to promote the building of synergies, which will not only promote total buy-in of all stakeholders in the development of programmes and projects that will be indigenous, it will also reduce overlaps and parallel processes, promote sharing of knowledge on state of the art inventions and transferable skills, and generally build friendship and collegiality among stakeholders involved in continental development.

### **Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

For too long, Africa has engaged in too many programmes with its Partners without achieving much. This is why there is an urgent need to streamline and specialize our Partnerships, and even engage in few, with a view to achieving more. Africa needs to engage with its Partners based on the Partners' areas of core competences as this will spell a huge departure from the erstwhile status quo where a bucket list of wishes was handed to partners without any focus on priority areas.

It is important to inform that to aid stronger cooperation with its Partners, the African Union has since embarked on the process of evaluating all its strategic partnerships to ascertain the benefits that have accrued overtime and extract ideas on how to catalyze those partnerships that have been hitherto inactive.

This process, expected to be brought to a conclusion during the upcoming February 2019 AU Summit, has yielded immense benefits for the AU in its relation with the rest of the world, including the need to establish a Platform that would assist in galvanizing the relevant stakeholders in driving the essence of Africa's strategic partnerships.

### **Excellencies, distinguished participants,**

At this year's meeting, we will seek to focus on the next phase of operationalizing the African Union Partnerships Coordination and Interactive Platform, which will entail:

- Taking stock of progress made since the launch of the platform in 2017;

- Launching and adopting the Project implementation roadmap for the Partnerships Management Information System (PMIS), and
- Mobilizing indigenous support for the actualization and operationalization of the AU-PCIP and build necessary Capacity around the functioning of the Platform.

### **Distinguished Participants,**

At this juncture, permit me to inform that for the first time ever, the African Union has been invited to participate in a World Expo. The Government of the United Arab Emirates has invited the African Union to participant in the upcoming Dubai Expo2020. The Expo will open on 20 October, 2020 and will run for six months until 10 April, 2021.

The Expo offers another vista of opportunity for the African Union to showcase to the world who we are and what we represent. It also affords us the opportunity to tell our story and tell our narrative the way it is. We call upon all the stakeholders within the African polity to join hands and make our participation in the Expo2020Dubai exceptional and successful.

## **Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

In conclusion, according to Julius Nyerere of Africa, in his words, and I quote: “My generation led Africa to political freedom. The current generation of leaders and peoples of Africa must pick up the flickering torch of African freedom, refuel it with their enthusiasm and determination, and carry it forward”.

Therefore, as the need for proactive, united and coordinated engagement between all African Partnerships stakeholders has become inevitable, **‘Let’s Talk’ and more importantly Act with One Voice!**

With those few remarks I wish all of us fruitful deliberation.

I thank you