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**TALKING POINTS FOR HER EXCELLENCY
DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON**

AfCFTA CONFERENCE ON WOMEN AND YOUTH IN TRADE

**12 SEPTEMBER 2022
DAR ES SALAAM – TANZANIA**

- **H.E. Samia Suluhu Hassan, President of the United Republic of Tanzania and Champion of the AfCFTA Protocol on Women and Youth in Trade;**
- **H.E. Sahle-Work Zewde President of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia;**
- **H.E. Jewel Howard Taylor, Vice President of the Republic of Liberia**
- **H.E. Jessica Rose Epel Alupo, Vice President of the Republic of Uganda**
- **H.E. Dr. Joyce Hilda Banda, Former President of the Republic of Malawi**
- **H.E. Ms. Aameena Gurib-Fakim, Former President of the Republic of Mauritius**
- **Hon. Amb. Liberata Mulamula, Minister of Foreign Affairs and East African Cooperation, United Republic of Tanzania;**
- **Hon. Dr. Ashatu K. Kijaji, Minister of Investment, Industry and Trade, United Republic of Tanzania;**
- **H.E. Kaouthar Krikou, Minister of National Solidarity, Family and Women Affairs, People's Democratic Republic of Algeria**
- **H.E. Wamkele Mene, Secretary General of the AfCFTA Secretariat;**
- **Distinguished Guests,**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen.**

Good morning,

It is indeed an honour and privilege to be part of the momentous event that is the AfCFTA Conference on Women and Youth in Trade.

I bring you greetings and good wishes from H.E. Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the African Union Commission, who also wishes you Happy 20th Anniversary of the African Union- marked on the 9th of September.

At the same time, we honor the memory of our colleague Mohamed Goukoye who passed away yesterday here in Dar es Salaam, while on duty to make our Conference a success. May God receive him in his paradise and grant comfort and strength to his loving wife and family as well as colleagues.

I take this opportunity to express my profound gratitude to H.E. Mama Samia Suluhu Hassan, President of the United Republic of Tanzania and to the People of the United Republic of Tanzania for the warm welcome extended to me and my delegation.

Allow me to congratulate you, Mama Samia, for accepting to advance the interests of women and youth in trade as the Champion of the AfCFTA Protocol on Women and Youth in Trade and for successfully hosting this AfCFTA Conference on Women and Youth in Trade.

Your Excellences, Distinguished Delegates and Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen;

Agenda 2063 of the African Union is founded on the conviction that the people of Africa are the architects of the continent's sustainable development and are therefore essential to achieving it.

It further recognizes the important role of women and youth in that regard. Indeed, Aspiration 6 of Agenda 2063 seeks to create a prosperous Africa whose development is people-driven relying on the potential offered by African people, especially its women and youth.

The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), a flagship project of Agenda 2063, is not only designed to increase intra-Africa trade flows but also to lift Africa's people out of poverty by offering them an enabling environment to raise revenues and access resources in an economically integrated continent.

Your Excellences, Distinguished Delegates and Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen;

It is critical to foster an inclusive and sustainable socio-economic development agenda that is anchored on the people who are to benefit from such development.

It is also important to ensure the effective implementation of supporting policies and programmes.

The AfCFTA Conference on Women and Youth in Trade offers an important platform to engage all stakeholders including women and youth entrepreneurs and businesses,

on the challenges they face as cross border traders, but also on the solutions they would like the AfCFTA, and more specifically, the Protocol on Women and Youth in Trade to bring for them.

The AfCFTA Conference on Women and Youth in Trade is a manifestation of the highest level of political commitment to ensure that no one is left behind and the presence of leaders here today is a clear confirmation and affirmation of this commitment.

For women and youth to take advantage of opportunities offered by the AfCFTA Agreement, they must have the capacity to access financial products and other factors of production to build and scale up their businesses in order to meet the demands of an AfCFTA market.

Financial inclusion is intrinsically linked to trade and is essential to the success of the AfCFTA. Indeed, for women and youth to access funds to grow and scale up their businesses, they must operate within the formal financial system.

It is with this imperative in mind, and in line with the African Union Decade on Women's Financial and Economic Inclusion 2020-2030, that the Women and Youth Financial and Economic Inclusion (WYFEI 2030) initiative of the African Union was framed.

Through this initiative, an accountable partnership framework is created to unlock US\$100 billion financing for at least 10 million African women and youth entrepreneurs by the end of 2030. The WYFEI 2030 initiative also seeks to secure increased representation of women and youth in leadership positions (AU commitment of 50% for women and 35% for youth) and in public procurement (at least 40%). Other deliverables include friendly policy, legal and regulatory environment that creates growth opportunities and jobs and make it easier for women and youth to do business.

I thank the Secretary General of the AfCFTA who continues to work closely with the AU Commission and other Organs of the Union as we take this initiative to the stage of implementation, the main success factor for which being ownership at country-level.

I therefore call on Government Authorities here present, including Ministries, Central Banks and other Regulators, to subscribe to this continental effort, customizing it to the best of their ability and committing to reporting progress on regular intervals.

Similarly, I extend an invitation to all stakeholders in the Private Sector, Financial Institutions, Civil Society, Women and Youth Networks, Faith-Based Organizations, and Development Partners, to put our resources together- financial and otherwise- in a co-creation mode to fully establish women and youth as powerhouse of our economies and contributors of solutions that Africa needs to feed itself, keep healthy, industrialize and trade more within its borders.

Your Excellences, Distinguished Delegates and Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen

I encourage us to take advantage of the platform offered by the AfCFTA Conference on Women and Youth in Trade to emerge with concrete actions with clear indicators of success. It is time to be deliberate and intentional in our approach to implementation of policies and programmes that enable women and youth to leverage opportunities offered by the AfCFTA and be masters of their own destinies.

The African Union Commission remains committed to work with all stakeholders including the AfCFTA Secretariat to ensure that the AfCFTA delivers on its promise of development for all.

I wish you successful deliberations.