

Excellency Mme. Gourouza Magagi Salamatou, Minister of Trade, Industry, and Youth entrepreneurship of the Government of Niger,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning,

It is a real privilege for me to participate today in the Senior Official meeting for the African Union Extraordinary Assembly on Industrialization, Economic Diversification, and the AfCFTA for 2022, which is perceived as a phenomenal milestone in our demarch to further speed up the inclusive and sustainable industrial development process in our Continent.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As you may be aware, Agenda 2063 calls for transforming Africa's economies through beneficiation from Africa's natural resources, manufacturing, industrialization, and value addition, as well as raising productivity and competitiveness.

There is, therefore, an urgent need to renew our focus on this age-old question of economic transformation in Africa, but this time, with a link to economic resilience in the context of global and regional trends and with the intention to inform ongoing and future policy discussions.

This debate has further gained unprecedented momentum in the wake of several concurrent crises that have eroded value chains at all levels and highlighted the importance of regional and continental self-reliance and sustainability, coupled with the high expectations for the successful operationalization of the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA).

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Cognizant of its mandate as the Development Agency of the African Union, **AUDA-NEPAD** strongly advocates for challenging traditional development narratives by fostering business unusual approaches to drive the transformation agenda across the Continent through prioritization of increased **local production** and **value-added**, **regional integration** and **inter-African trade**, and the acceleration of Africa's industrialization to achieve our people's legitimate aspirations as stipulated in **Agenda 2063**.

In doing so, industrial development is a ***cross-cutting issue*** reflected in all AUDA-NEPAD thematic delivery priorities, and much of our work and thought pieces have aligned to support the realization of this overarching target.

Besides, AUDA-NEPAD prioritizes the following key thematic areas of intervention to take Africa's industrialization drive forward:

- ❖ Taping the ***potentials of Africa's demographic dividend***: To this end, AUDA-NEPAD recently launched, a flagship program entitled "***Energize Africa***" to harness the potential of Africa's Youth to transform the Continent.
- ❖ ***Inclusive and sustainable industrial development in Africa***: In recognition of the mutually reinforcing interdependencies between accelerated industrialization and the successful implementation of the AfCFTA, AUDA-NEPAD is driving impactful program interventions in three main areas: ***manufacturing and value addition*** (MSMEs development), ***tradeable services*** (tourism and creative industries), and ***minerals development***.
- ❖ ***Coordinated and innovative strategic management of Industrialisation for Africa***: in collaboration with relevant stakeholders, development partners, and DFIs at all levels.
- ❖ ***Value chain and participatory approaches***, with a particular focus on providing a conducive enabling environment for **MSMEs and the private**

sector to grow and innovate along the value chain in critical industrial sectors.

- ❖ ***Blue economy and connectivity*** to support the implementation of the Continental Blue.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I want to conclude my address by underlining my Agency's strong desire to see the AU Extraordinary Assembly on Industrialization, Economic Diversification, and the AFCFTA concluding with a ***shared vision*** and clear pathway for joint action toward Africa's Industrialisation. Despite the enormity of the task ahead, we rest assured that the Assembly will set this Continent on a solid trajectory toward realizing our **transformation agenda**.

To this end, I wish to reiterate AUDA-NEPAD's firm **commitment** to working together with all of our respected stakeholders and supporting your myriad efforts to ensure the successful organization and operationalization of the Assembly.

I thank you