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Opening Remarks by

H.E. Amb. Amma A. Twum-Amoah,

**Commissioner for Health, Humanitarian Affairs and
Social Development,**

**Member States and Regional Economic
Communities Meeting,**

3-4 July 2025:

Accra, Ghana

**AMB. PERPETUA DUFU, COORDINATING
DIRECTOR AND REPRESENTATIVE OF THE
GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF GHANA,**

**DISTINGUISHED DELEGATES FROM AU MEMBER
STATES,**

**ESTEEMED REPRESENTATIVES OF THE REGIONAL
ECONOMIC COMMUNITIES,**

**COLLEAGUES FROM AFCFTA, PAN AFRICAN
PARLIAMENT AND OTHER AU ORGANS,**

TRUSTED PARTNERS

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

It is with great honour and sincere appreciation that I welcome all of you to this important coordination meeting convened by the African Union Commission. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to you for your commitment to our shared continental vision and one of our flagship programmes - the Protocol on Free Movement of Persons, Rights of Residence and the Rights of Establishment.

Let me take this opportunity to also thank the Government and people of the Republic of Ghana for the warm welcome and great hospitality enjoyed by all delegations. We are happy to be in Ghana the home of our African unity, Pan-Africanism and continued leadership in integration. I commend Ghana for its sustained commitment to regional and continental integration, particularly in the context of ECOWAS protocols and the African Union's Free Movement Agenda.

Today, we converge around the Free Movement of Persons Protocol, an agenda that is central to our aspiration for an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa. As we deliberate on this crucial matter, we do so within the broader framework of **Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want**. This transformative vision compels us to deepen integration, foster unity and unlock the continent's full socio-economic potential.

It is, however, sad to note that, since its adoption in January 2018 only 4 Member States, namely, Mali, Niger, Rwanda and Sao Tome and Principe have ratified the

FMP protocol, though 32 Member States have signed as of July 2022. This is not progressive, it is retrogressive in the sense that, the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA), which was also adopted in the same year, did not experience the same ratification challenges. There is a disconnect, in that, **without the Free Movement of People, the Free Trade Agreement will not work.**

The right and ability of Africans to move freely, safely and orderly across our continent is not merely a technical or administrative undertaking. It is an expression of our unity and a catalyst for economic dynamism, social cohesion, and development. Enhanced mobility facilitates the exchange of skills and knowledge, boosts intra-African trade, and strengthens people-to-people connections, all of which lay the foundation for a truly integrated Africa, united in purpose and action

We are mindful that this ambitious vision is not without challenges. Infrastructural limitations, policy inconsistencies, nonexistence civil registration,

administrative bottlenecks and security concerns continue to hinder seamless mobility. It is, therefore, incumbent upon us to engage in frank and forward-looking dialogue to identify and agree on solutions that are both practical and sustainable and reflect our collective resolve to make Free Movement of People, Goods and Services a reality for all Africans.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to commend the just concluded **peer-to-peer experience-sharing initiative** that we have had an opportunity to witness between **the Republic of Ghana and Republic of Togo** at the Noepe Joint Border Post. This initiative highlighted the investment in health screening systems, infrastructure modernisation and coordination among government agencies, thereby exemplifying the tangible benefits of practical cooperation and coordinated border management. The Noepe post, is more than a physical crossing of people, it has become a symbol of opportunity, promoting cross-border trade, supporting small-scale women entrepreneurs and reinforcing the spirit of regional solidarity.

In the same context, the experiences drawn from **Kotoka International Airport** (KIA) here in Accra, serve as an excellent demonstration of how mobility can be enhanced through innovation and digitalisation. By streamlining visa processes for African nationals, embracing biometric technologies, digital health surveillance and enhancing the traveler cross border mobility experience, including the use of Ghana (ID) cards, KIA has emerged as a model of continental connectivity, highlighting what is possible when ambition is matched with action.

These examples provide valuable insights and best practices. As such, they should not only be celebrated but also studied and adapted within the varying contexts of our Member States and the RECs. Indeed, success stories from countries such as Benin, The Gambia, Mauritius, Rwanda and Seychelles, in addition to the bilateral visa waivers by Member States also attest to the fact that progress is within reach, when there is political will and coordinated effort,

From these peer learning experiences, the following key lessons have emerged, which I urge us to take note of:

1. **Strengthening policy and legal frameworks** to ensure coherence between national and regional approaches to free movement of persons;
2. **Border infrastructure and digital technology** to enhance efficiency and security;
3. **Raising public awareness and fostering civic engagement** to build social acceptance of mobility; and
4. **Institutionalising peer-learning platforms** to facilitate knowledge sharing and mutual support across Member States and RECs.

Dear colleagues and Participants,

Let us be reminded that the **Protocol on Free Movement of Persons and the African Passport** remains one of

the key enablers of Africa's integration and sustainable development. Our gathering must increase our sense of hope, renew our commitment to accelerating its ratification and domestication. Achieving **at least 15 ratifications** is both a strategic and symbolic milestone toward realising the vision of Aspiration 2: an integrated Africa, politically united and based on the ideals of Pan-Africanism and the vision of Africa's Renaissance.

Let this meeting serve as a platform not only for policy dialogue but also for planning coordinated collective actions and for our unwavering commitment to the African Union integration agenda.

I look forward to the concrete outcomes that will emerge from this meeting.

I thank you.