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Intra-African Trade Fair (IATF) 2025

**Boosting Intra-African Trade for a Sustainable Future: Innovation,
Value Addition, and Green Industrialization**

Algiers, Algeria 4 September 2025

Opening Remarks

for

H.E. Amb Selma Malika Haddadi

Deputy Chairperson, African Union Commission

السيد عبد المجيد تبون، رئيس الجمهورية الجزائرية الديمقراطية الشعبية،

أصحاب الفخامة رؤساء الدول والحكومات،

أصحاب المعالي نواب الرؤساء،

فخامة الرئيس أولوسيغون أوباسانجو، رئيس المجلس الاستشاري

للمعرض التجاري الإفريقي البيني،

أصحاب المعالي الوزراء المشاركين والمنظمين لهذا الحدث، ونخص

بالذكر :

السيد سيفي غريب، الوزير الأول بالنيابة،

السيد السعيد شنقريحة، الفريق أول، الوزير المنتدب لدى وزير الدفاع

الوطني، رئيس أركان الجيش الوطني الشعبي.

السيد احمد عطاف، وزير الدولة وزير الشؤون الخارجية والجالية الوطنية

بالخارج والشؤون الإفريقية،

السيد كمال رزيق، وزير التجارة الخارجية وترقية الصادرات،

السيد الطيب زيتوني، وزير التجارة الداخلية وتنظيم السوق الوطنية،

سعادة الدكتور بندكت أوراما، رئيس البنك الإفريقي للتصدير والاستيراد،

السيد وامكلي ميني، الأمين العام لمنطقة التجارة الحرة القارية الإفريقية،
سعادة السفير العربي لطرش، محافظ الدورة الرابعة للمعرض التجاري
الإفريقي البيني (IATF)،
سعادة السفراء ممثلي السلك الدبلوماسي المعتمد بالجزائر،
الضيوف الكرام، من كل نواحي إفريقيا و العالم،
ممثلوا الأسرة الإعلامية،
السيدات والسادة،
مع حفظ الأسماء و المقامات،

يشرفني، باسم الاتحاد الإفريقي، أن أتوجّه بأسمى عبارات التقدير
والامتنان إلى السيد الرئيس عبد المجيد تبون، وإلى الشعب الجزائري،
على حفاوة الاستقبال وكرم الضيافة اللذان لمسناهما منذ أن وطئت أقدامنا
هذا البلد الغالي علينا جميعا للمشاركة في هذه التظاهرة الإفريقية البارزة،
المعرض الإفريقي للتجارة البينية في طبعته الرابعة، المنعقد تحت شعار:
"بوابة العبور إلى فرص جديدة".

إن انعقاد هذا الحدث في الجزائر، بوابة أفريقيا، لهو دلالة على أن الجزائر
المرحابة تظل على الدوام حاضنة لوحدة إفريقيا، و مدخل نحو آفاقها

الرحبة، وفضاءً خصبا لتعزيز أواصر الأخوة والتعاون بين دولها وشعوبها.

الجزائر التي كانت وما تزال جسراً بين شعوب القارة وفضاءً جامعاً لوحدها، كما يعكس مكانة الجزائر كمنازة للوحدة الإفريقية ورافعة للتكامل الاقتصادي بين دولنا.

ويطيب لي، في هذا المقام، أن أنقل إلى فخامتكم تحيات وتمنيات معالي رئيس مفوضية الاتحاد الإفريقي، السيد محمود علي يوسف، بنجاح هذا الملتقى القاري المتميز.

كما أود أن أؤكد تقديرنا العميق لشركائنا في تنظيم هذا المعرض: البنك الإفريقي للتصدير والاستيراد، وأمانة منطقة التجارة الحرة القارية الإفريقية، وكل من ساهم بجهده ورؤيته في بناء هذه المنصة الجماعية التي نطمح من خلالها إلى إطلاق إمكانات قارتنا الهائلة وتعزيز تجارتها البينية، بما يعود بالنفع والازدهار على شعوب إفريقيا كافة.

اسمحوا لي الآن بقراءة نص كلمة معالي رئيس مفوضية الاتحاد الإفريقي، السيد محمود علي يوسف، باللغة الانجليزية، المعدة بهذه المناسبة،

“Excellencies, Distinguished guests,

Since its inception in 2018, the Intra-African Trade Fair (IATF) has emerged as Africa's premier trade and investment marketplace.

The numbers are witness to this success.

From its first edition in 2018, with just over one thousand exhibitors and \$32 billion in commitments, to Durban in 2021 with \$42 billion despite a global pandemic, and Cairo last year, surpassing \$43 billion, and today Algiers that is even more promising, each fair has brought us closer to the aspirations of the African Union Agenda 2063: an integrated, connected, and prosperous Africa.

But these are not just deals; they are the very fibre of an integrated and prosperous continent, woven together by inclusive growth, sustainable

development, and our shared aspirations for stability.

This fourth intra-African Trade Fair, convened in Algiers, under the theme “*Boosting Intra-African Trade for a Sustainable Future: Innovation, Value Addition, and Green Industrialization,*” **is therefore both timely and strategic.**

It speaks to the actions Africa must take now: to innovate, to add value, and to industrialise so that we no longer remain exporters of unprocessed raw materials but become architects of the very industries that will power Africa’s prosperity.

In the shifting global geopolitical and geoeconomic context, this should no longer be a distant aspiration but an urgent imperative, and it is becoming a reality.

The African Union, through the AfCFTA, and in close cooperation with African institutions, notably the Afreximbank, continues to drive this agenda.

This is why, the African Union Commission, as a co-convenor of IATF2025, intends to leverage this important and strategic platform to advance the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), the AU's Agenda 2063 as well as its very successful partnerships with pan-African institutions like Afreximbank, to promote trade, investment, value creation, and industrialization across the continent.

Through its activities, the AUC will champion flagship initiatives such as the Youth Start-Up Pavilion and the African Women in Processing Pavilion (AWIP), while also spearheading high-

level policy dialogues on trade and industrial development.

In addition, the AU will showcase Agenda 2063 flagship projects and highlight opportunities in digital trade, green industrialization, and inclusive growth.

As part of these efforts, the AUC will co-deliver the Youth Start-Up Program in collaboration with the Algerian Ministry of Start-Ups. Among others, the program will feature:

- 63 start-ups exhibiting innovative solutions,
- Masterclasses on venture capital and investment readiness,
- A competitive pitching session,
- Panel discussions with industry leaders, and
- Networking opportunities with investors, mentors, and policymakers.

Paving the way for the next edition of the 4th African startup conference, later this year in Algeria, these activities are designed to connect young African entrepreneurs with critical resources and partnerships, creating pathways to scale innovations across borders and contribute to Africa's broader integration and economic transformation agenda.

Excellencies, ladies and Gentlemen,

Boosting intra-African trade is not simply an economic imperative but a measure of our political resolve and our commitment to reform. **Africa contributes just 2.9% to global trade.**

While intra-African trade still represents a small fraction of the continent's overall trade, it has been steadily increasing. Between 2017 and 2023, intra-

African trade expanded by 27%, approaching the USD 200 billion mark.

Most importantly, our internal trade can be a powerful agent for our industrialisation. Indeed, unlike our international trade, intra-African trade is mainly driven by manufactured products. While Africa's exports outside the continent are only constituted of 20 per cent of manufactured goods, 45 per cent of trade between African countries comprises manufactured goods.

Despite its potential, intra-African trade still represents a mere 15% of total African trade. This imbalance is not only the result of an unfair international trade regime. It is also the result of choices we have made, and therefore choices we have the power to change. Intra-African trade is and should be our point of focus.

We have signed declarations, adopted strategies, and launched frameworks. Yet too often, our actions fall short of our promises.

The barriers to our integration are not distant or theoretical; they are systemic: restrictions that make trading with a neighbor more costly than trading abroad; infrastructure that fragments our continent and makes it easier to send goods overseas than across our own borders; and financial systems that do not connect, leaving African businesses unable to settle payments at home as easily as they do with partners far away.

We also need to connect our ambition with actions.

We speak of industrialization, but our ambition will remain words on a page unless African

industries have access to power, roads, logistics, and digital connectivity.

We speak of empowering women and youth, but unless capital, credit, and markets are accessible to them, empowerment will remain a promise unfulfilled.

We speak of integration, but unless our institutions harmonize regulations, standards, and payment systems, integration will remain a statement rather than a reality.

We speak of changing the international trade rules to create space for our industrial policy but we do not invest enough in our negotiating capacity to secure such interests.

Therefore, our task is to turn political will into real change: to rewrite our rules of trade so that they serve Africans first; to build infrastructure that connects African economies before connecting us to the world; to modernize our financial systems; to design policies that place women and youth at the center, not the margins, of Africa's transformation, and to support the private sector and entrepreneurship as a dynamic force for our economies to prosper and our intra-African market to expand.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have been franc about our challenges — not to discourage us, but to strengthen our resolve. For, if we have achieved so much with bridges still under construction, imagine what we will accomplish when those bridges are complete.

Allow me, however, to acknowledge the remarkable dynamism that exists across the continent and which needs harnessing. In 2023, intra-African investment stocks reached approximately **\$76 billion**, a significant rise from **\$19 billion** in 2010. In the same year, **Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)** from outside the continent totalled **\$53 billion**.

The role of our own private sector—from small-scale traders to large conglomerates—has been pivotal in broadening trading and investment opportunities within Africa. By harnessing and supporting homegrown dynamics, we can power our own growth. The opportunity is ours to seize.

That is the Africa we are working towards: an integrated and prosperous Africa where growth is

inclusive and built on dignity and self-reliance; a peaceful Africa where stability allows enterprise to flourish; and a confident Africa that takes its rightful place as a dynamic force in the global arena. An Africa where **“Made in Africa”** is not only a mark of origin, but a symbol of dignity and pride.

Here in Algeria, a country that has long embodied Pan-African solidarity, and which rich experience in economic transformation and important ongoing efforts for diversification is an inspiration - we carry that legacy forward by making this Fourth Intra-African Trade Fair another milestone in Africa's integration journey.

So I leave you with this challenge: before you depart Algiers, commit to one partnership, remove one barrier, simplify one process,

or place your trust in one African product you had not trusted before.

We cannot ask the world to believe in “*Made in Africa*” if we do not believe in it ourselves. As our Algerian brothers and sisters say in their wisdom, “***Li ma yethiq fi rouhou, ma ythiq fih el ghir***” those who do not trust themselves will not earn the trust of others.

May this Fourth Intra-African Trade Fair be remembered not only for deals closed but also for the unity it strengthens, the pride it rekindles, and the future it brings nearer.

Let me end my remarks by congratulating Algeria and its leadership for the remarkable organisation of the IATF2025 and for the **magnificent** hospitality.

Equally so, I would like to warmly congratulate The Federal Republic of Nigeria for hosting the **5th edition of IATF** in Lagos 2027”

كما لا يفوتني في الختام أن أتقدّم بخالص التهاني بمناسبة المولد النبوي الشريف، أعاده الله علينا وعليكم بالخير واليمن والبركات.

شكرا.