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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

**Sixth Session of the Committee on Trade,
Regional Cooperation and Integration**

**13-15 October 2009
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia**

DRAFT COMMUNIQUÉ

**Communiqué of the Sixth Session of the Committee on Trade,
Regional Cooperation and Integration**

1. We, the representatives of the following Member States of the United Nations in the Africa region: Algeria, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Chad, Congo (Republic of), Democratic Republic of Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Egypt, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, Sudan, Swaziland, Tanzania, Tunisia, Uganda and Zimbabwe met at the headquarters of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 13 to 15 October 2009 to participate in the Sixth Session of the Committee on Trade, Regional Cooperation and Integration. The following institutions and organizations were represented at the meeting: the African Union Commission (AUC), Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD), Community of the Great Lakes countries (CEPGL), the African Development Bank (AfDB), United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO), World Trade Organization (WTO), Walvis Bay Corridor Group (WBCG), the United States Mission to the African Union, Centre of Studies on Regional Integration and SADC Law at Eduardo Mondlane University, United Nations liaison Office to the AU, World Bank and European Union delegation to the African Union.

2. We elected the following countries to constitute its Bureau for the sixth meeting of the Committee:

Chairman:	Ethiopia
First Vice-Chairman:	South Africa
Second Vice-Chairman:	Ghana
Third Vice-Chairman:	Gabon
Rapporteur:	Egypt

3. The main focus of the Committee was to consider activities undertaken by ECA to advance the African Union's continental agenda on economic cooperation and promote trade within and outside Africa. In that regard, we examined the progress made on regional integration in Africa and reviewed developments in intra-African trade. We also examined the latest developments in the international trade arena, particularly within the context of the WTO negotiations and Africa's economic

partnership arrangements with Europe. We further examined the issue of mainstreaming regional integration at the national level and made recommendations for enhancing implementation of Africa's regional integration agenda accordingly. Finally, the Committee reviewed major activities undertaken during the current biennium and work priorities for 2010-2011.

4. We received various presentations from ECA, the AU Commission, AfDB and other institutions on the various issues listed in paragraph 3. We took note of the presentations and commended the various presenters. We noted the progress being made in advancing continental integration; the minimum integration programme of the AU; trade facilitation efforts and the need for mainstreaming regional integration at the national level. We also identified the challenges constraining the integration of the continent and the urgent need to address them.

5. We underscored the need for the popularization of the regional integration agenda and the important role of the media in sensitising the public on regional integration issues, including the work of the African Union, the RECs and other stakeholders pushing forward the regional integration agenda. We further underscored the key role that the media could play in ensuring that member States of the African Union mainstream regional integration into national programmes and national laws, including the implementation of the protocols and Decisions of the AU and RECs at the national level.

6. After fruitful, frank and exhaustive deliberations of the items on the Agenda, the Committee made the following recommendations:

Minimum Integration Programme

- i Member States to take necessary measures to integrate the Minimum Integration Programme in their national planning as recommended by the Fourth Conference of African Ministers in Charge of Integration, held in Yaounde, in May, 2009
- ii Member States, RECs and partners to actively participate in the sectoral meetings organized by the AUC in order to identify the prioritized sectors which are considered as accelerators of the integration process

- iii Member States to lend the required support to RECs in order to effectively meet the objectives of the Abuja Treaty by accelerating the implementation of the African Integration Agenda

Mainstreaming regional integration at the national level

- iv Member States are urged to implement all Decisions of the AU Assembly and those of RECs they belong to. In this regard, member States are encouraged to take steps to mainstream AU and RECs protocols and Decisions into their national laws
- v To enhance coordination and implementation of regional integration at the national level, member States who have not established specialized Ministries on regional integration are urged to establish dedicated structures, in accordance with Executive Council Decision EX.CL/Dec.437 (XIII) to coordinate and oversee implementation of regional integration agreements and programmes at the national level
- vi Member States are urged to popularize the continental integration agenda at the grassroots level within their countries. In this regard, the AU Commission, ECA RECS, AfDB and other institutions are urged to support member States to organize sensitization seminars, workshops and conferences on regional integration, etc.

Trade facilitation

- vii Member States, RECs, and corridor management institutions are urged to build capacity of their officials to plan and implement trade facilitation activities
- viii Member States are encouraged to implement measures to reduce high transport costs by improving transport infrastructure, reducing tariffs, removing non-tariff barriers and reducing delays along corridors and at borders
- ix Member States are urged to promote the role of railways by enhancing regional connectivity and undertaking network rehabilitation and reforms in management so as to benefit from the lower costs which ensue from rail transport
- x Public Private Partnerships are urged to promote trade facilitation, financing of infrastructure and effective management of corridors
- xi Member States are urged to remove all forms of non-tariff barriers so as to enhance facilitation of trade
- xii Member States are urged to remove or lessen restrictions on visas for Africans to their countries so as to promote free movement of Africans within the continent

International trade negotiations

- xiii In light of assessments by several studies that potential gains from WTO negotiations and EPAs to African countries are limited, there is a need to articulate other options for boosting the continent's trade, including enhancing intra-African trade
- xiv Member States are encouraged to diversify their production and output profiles so as to address the supply constraints faced by many African countries as well as enable them to participate effectively in intra-African trade and reap greater benefits from RECs trade

liberalization programmes.

- xv African Countries and RECs are urged to make maximum use of the EPA template prepared by AU in collaboration with ECA
- xvi African countries are urged to develop appropriate mechanisms to ensure effective use of resources under AfT
- xvii In addition to supporting the regional dimension of AfT, ECA and its African Trade Policy Centre (ATPC) are requested to undertake studies on the impact of AfT in recipient countries as resources may permit
- xviii ECA is urged to continue with its technical collaboration with the AU Commission, RECs and Member States on international trade negotiations. In this regard, ECA is urged to provide technical support to the African Union Commission in its mandate to coordinate WTO and EPA negotiations, with a view to establishing a common African voice and ensuring that the outcome of the negotiations supports the development agenda of Africa.

Observatory on regional integration

- xix Member States and RECs are urged to designate focal points which will constantly link up with ECA in providing information and updating the content of the Observatory. Member States are also urged to provide support for making the Observatory available in other official languages

Partnership with Pan-African institutions

- xx ECA is urged to continue to work closely with the African Union Commission, the African Development Bank and RECs in the advancement of the continental integration agenda. In this regard, there is the need to be realistic about goals and expectations and focus on actions that countries are prepared to undertake

xxi ECA and AU are urged to harmonize their meetings on trade and regional integration. In this regard, ECA should explore the possibility of aligning the Committee on Trade, Regional Cooperation and Integration with the AU Conference of Ministers in charge of regional integration

7. We thanked His Excellency Mr. Ahmed Shide, State Minister for External Economic Cooperation of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia for delivering the keynote statement. We thanked His Excellency Mr. Maxwell Mkwezalamba, AU Commissioner for Economic Affairs, Ms. Lalla Ben Barka, Deputy Executive Secretary of ECA and Her Excellency Mrs. Najat Hassan, representing Sudan as the Chair of our fifth meeting, for their statements at the opening ceremony of the meeting.

8. We also thanked our development partners for their continued support to ECA, particularly Canada, for its financial support to the ECA African Trade Policy Centre (ATPC) and the pooled funds of Sweden, United Kingdom and Denmark for their support for the preparation and publication of the 4th report of *Assessing Regional Integration in Africa (ARIA IV)*, which is focused on the promotion of intra-African trade, highlights of which were presented to us. We urged these partners to continue to support ECA to carry out its mandate.

Done in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on 15 October 2009