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STATEMENT OF HER EXCELLENCY

MRS. TUMUSIIME RHODA PEACE, COMMISSIONER FOR
RURAL ECONOMY AND AGRICULTURE,
AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION

ON THE OCCASION OF THE

MINISTERIAL SEGMENT OF THE AFRICAN
CONSULTATIONS ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPEMT GOALS

MONDAY 4 NOVEMBER 2013
UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA,
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

All Protocol observed.

I have the honour to address Honourable Ministers and other distinguished delegates. I, first of all, convey to you warm greetings and best wishes from Her Excellency Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, Chairperson of the African Union Commission. The Commission of the African Union is pleased to be continuing to work closely with the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa and other partners in supporting AU Member States' harmonisation of policies and coordination of implementation of various development programmes and projects.

We are, this time round, happy to be working together in carrying on the tradition of ensuring that Africa goes to the international arena as a unified strong force speaking with one voice, that is loud and clear. We saw that this approach work well for us in respect of the Rio+20, the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development and also in Conferences of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, among others. We remain grateful to the leadership and stakeholders of all AU Member States that have upheld this tradition. We, on our part, remain committed to providing all possible support in furtherance of this.

It is in this context that we are gathering here to contribute to Africa's common position on Sustainable Development Goals. And, at this juncture, I wish to commend all those that have made the groundwork in preparation for this Conference, including our officials from the continental institutions as well as from member states and indeed from our Missions at the United Nations in New York, who are also represented here. This is the spirit we need to maintain in pursuit of the defence and promotion of Africa's interest in global negotiations.

The African Union Commission considers SDGs as being extremely important in all their dimensions: social, economic and environmental. We also consider this process as complementary and converging with the Post-2015 Development Agenda. We are encouraged by the progress registered by a number of AU Member States towards attaining MDGs. We also note the unfinished business in this regard as well as the lessons learnt that we can build on for the coming phase. For example, there has been improvement in school enrolment but we need to do more to enhance the quality of education. We have registered improvement in gender equality but we need to do more on women and youth economic empowerment. Water supply and access has by and large improved but a lot more effort is needed for better sanitation. Also, some in-roads have been made in combating hunger though a lot needs to be done to reduce malnutrition and also to build resilience in the face of the impacts of climate change. We have seen many of our economies grow fast and now the call is for inclusive growth for all sections of our society to participate in delivering this growth and also to enjoy the benefits of economic growth. And as we advance economic growth and social wellbeing we remain conscious of our obligation to meet our needs while guaranteeing the needs of future generations, through sustainable management of our environment ranging from our water towers to forest reserves and others.

It is this conviction and commitment that brings all of us here together. I, therefore, salute all of you Honourable Ministers and delegates and encourage you to stay the course. We also find it opportune that this debate is taking place in the Year of Pan Africanism and African Renaissance and we are meeting at the time that we are also in advanced stages of the formulation of the Africa Agenda 2063 that AU Heads of State and Government will be considering for adoption at their Summit in January next year in Addis Ababa.

I look forward to productive deliberations and our continued collaboration in refining Africa's common position and effectively championing it.

Thank you for your attention.