

**STATEMENT FOR USE BY H.E. THE PRESIDENT DURING  
DISCUSSIONS ON THE THEME OF THE SUMMIT -  
“BOOSTING INTRA-AFRICAN TRADE”, ADDIS ABABA,  
ETHIOPIA: 29 - 30 JANUARY, 2011**

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**Your Excellency, Chair of the African Union,  
Excellencies, Heads of State and Government,  
Your Excellencies, the Chair of the African Union  
Commission and other Commissioners,  
Ladies and gentlemen,**

May I at the onset express my profound gratitude to Your Excellency Meles Zenawi, as well as to the Government and the people of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, for the warm welcome and generous hospitality extended to my delegation since our arrival in this beautiful city of Addis Ababa. I would also like to pay tribute to His Excellency President Nguema for his leadership to the Union in the last 12 months and congratulate the incoming Chair, His Excellency President Yayi Boni for assuming the Chair of our Union. I wish you every bit of success during your term.

The theme of this Summit is of great importance for Kenya, the East Africa Community, and the entire African continent. It therefore gives me great pleasure to share a few thoughts on the subject.

### **Excellencies,**

The theme '**Boosting Intra-African Trade**' presents us with an opportunity to share ideas for a prosperous Africa. As you are all aware, the current level of trade within Africa remains too low compared to other regions. It is therefore imperative for us to review our achievements and chart the way forward for increased trade on the continent.

Increasing intra-regional trade requires us to bolster cooperation between our governments and open up borders to let our people move and trade freely. We must also invest in infrastructure, the development of human capital, embark on rapid industrialization and create enabling domestic economic policies. Combined, these efforts will create employment, increase trade and multiply Africa's wealth and prosperity.

## **Excellencies,**

In the East African Community, we have made significant progress in boosting intra-regional trade. Between 2005 and 2010 our regional trade doubled from about **2 billion US dollars** in 2005 to **4 billion US dollars** in 2010. Our Customs Union and the Common Market, have boosted the overall trade performance. The benefits from this growth have accrued to all Partner States, and particularly, the smaller economies.

We are now focusing on deepening this integration by moving to higher levels, such a monetary union in the medium to long term. In the short term, we are working to remove non-tariff barriers, implement a single tourist visa, facilitate movement of our nationals using identity cards, and making the East Africa airspace a domestic airspace.

## **Excellencies,**

Having experienced the benefits of integration, the EAC is fully committed to the establishment of the Grand Continental Free

Trade Area. In this regard, we have commenced negotiations towards a COMESA-EAC-SADC Tripartite agreement. These negotiations are scheduled to be completed in 25 months. We are committed to meet this deadline.

Our experience within the EAC and COMESA shows that opening up countries to intra-regional trade does not translate into loss of revenue. Indeed, studies show that a good number of countries accrue increased government revenue as a result of regional trade.

### **Excellencies,**

In conclusion, I am convinced that Africa and her people stand to benefit greatly from intra-African trade. In view of the demands for growth in all African countries, efforts to increase intra-regional trade should be guided by political commitment accompanied by measurable, time-bound targets.

We have paved the way for free trade in East Africa and our people have started to enjoy the benefits of integration. It is my hope that the EAC experience can be replicated in other regions of the continent.

**Thank you.**