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Plenary on Item 6:
Economic development in Africa: Intra-African trade:
Unlocking Private Sector Dynamism
Speaker: Thailand

Thursday, 19 September 2013
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Statement by
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Ambassador and Deputy Permanent Representative of Thailand to the United
Nations Office and other International Organizations in Geneva
Item 6 (Economic Development in Africa: Intra-African trade: Unlocking private
sector dynamism,
Thursday, 19 September 2013 at 10.00 hrs
Palais des Nations, Geneva

Time Limit: 4 Minutes
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Mr. Chairman,
Secretary-General,
Distinguished Colleagues,

First, my delegation would like to align itself with the statements made by the delegation of Ecuador on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and by the delegation of Iraq on behalf of the Asian Group. Mr. Chairman, I would like to add the following comments.

The issue of economic development in Africa is fundamental to building blocks of inclusive development. We believe that economic growth through reliance on oneself or one's neighbour, shielded from external shocks, is the best way to achieve sustainable development.

We take note of this year's Report with much interest. The debate on regional integration and its relationship to efficient domestic policy is worth a special mention. In addition, the increasing role of the private sector and their interaction with government policies is very thought-provoking.

On intra-regional trade, we would like to take this opportunity to share our experience relevant to this debate. I would like to draw your attention to the ASEAN Economic Community or the AEC which is to be realised by 2015. We, too, have encouraged intra-region trade to boost economic growth. The main objective of the AEC is to create a single market, economically competitive, while maintaining equitable development, which is integrated into the world economy. Since 2007, ASEAN countries have gradually lowered import duties with the targeted of zero for most of the import duties by 2015. ASEAN is also working on a Comprehensive Investment Area which will encourage free

flow of investment within the region. All sectors are to be opened up for investment, with exclusions to be eventually phased out. With national treatment to be granted to ASEAN investors with few exclusion, we hope this will boost the regional and domestic economy.

Mr. Chairman,

In addition to the emphasis on the domestic and regional market, a healthy access to an external market is also crucial to development. Thailand considers Africa as our key economic partner. This year, the Royal Thai Government has launched the Thai-African Initiative. In July and August of this year, our Prime Minister paid official visits to Mozambique, Uganda, and Tanzania. This Initiative will ensure closer ties between Thailand and Africa with emphasis on better transportation links between the two regions. Further, it will work on better people-to-people links to promote cultural exchanges and tourism. With the aim to enhance trade, in particular providing easier trade access between the two partners, we are confident that the Initiative will be vital to the prosperity of the regions.

With this in mind, I would like to underline our commitment to our colleagues from Africa, and offer our support in any way that we can.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.