

**60<sup>th</sup> Session of the Trade and Development Board**  
*Economic Development in Africa Segment*

**Statement by Petko Draganov**  
**Deputy Secretary-General of UNCTAD**

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Mr. President,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Secretary-General of UNCTAD, Dr. Mukhisa Kituyi, who as you know is currently in New York at the invitation of the UN Secretary-General, I am pleased to welcome you to this year's Economic Development in Africa segment of the Trade and Development Board. As in the past, our deliberations will be divided into two sessions. This morning, you will hear a presentation of the main findings of this year's Economic Development in Africa Report (EDAR), entitled "*Intra-African Trade: Unlocking Private Sector Dynamism.*", which will be followed by an interactive discussion. The afternoon session will take the form of a panel discussion on the theme of the EDAR and I am delighted to inform you that we have three distinguished Africans as panelists, who will provide further insights on the theme of the report. I am also pleased to say that Dr. Kituyi will participate in the panel discussion by video conference.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This year's EDAR focuses on how to boost intra-African trade, an issue that has been at the center of economic policy discussions in Africa since the 1960s. As you are well aware, to date, Africa's regional trade performance has been modest at best and this has been a source of concern to policymakers on the continent. In an effort to address this issue, African Heads of State and Government renewed their political commitment to boosting intra-African trade at the African Union (AU) Summit held in January 2012. They also endorsed an Action Plan for boosting intra-African trade and made a decision to fast-track the establishment of a

Continental Free Trade Area by 2017. UNCTAD welcomes this AU Action Plan and has carried out some activities to support its implementation. For example, at the UNCTAD XIII conference held in Doha last year, we organized a special session aimed at identifying areas in which we could assist the AU in implementing its Action Plan. The focus of the EDAR 2013 on intra-African trade is also part of our ongoing efforts in this regard.

The report analyzes the challenges and opportunities for regional trade in Africa, including some of the reasons why opportunities for cross-border trade in Africa have not been fully exploited. It also proposes ways in which African countries can enhance implementation of existing regional agreements to boost intra-African trade. In particular, it argues that African governments should enhance the capacity of domestic enterprises to produce and export; and suggests ways of achieving this. It also covers different measures which development partners can take to contribute to achieving Africa's regional trade and integration agenda.

The main message of the report is that intra-African trade presents significant opportunities for sustained growth and development but that seizing these opportunities requires unlocking private sector dynamism and adopting a development-based approach to integration. My colleague, Mr. Taffere Tesfachew, Director of the Division for Africa, LDCs and Special Programmes, will make a more detailed presentation of the report in a few minutes.

The report was launched in 12 countries in July, was very well received, and received broad press coverage. We are glad about the growing partnerships with Government departments, African institutions and international organizations in the

dissemination of the report. For example, in Mauritius the report was launched by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade. In Ethiopia the AU Commissioner for Economic Affairs chaired the event, and in Senegal, the Deputy Chief of Staff in the Office of the President graced the occasion. The following institutions were also involved in the dissemination of the report: The African Capacity Building Foundation, the Industrial Development Corporation of South Africa, the University of Lagos, the United Nations Development Programme, the Third World Network, the French Agency for International Development and the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Going forward, we are exploring the possibility of carrying out more dissemination activities on the report through seminars and workshops in Africa but, of course, this will depend on our ability to mobilize the required resources.

We hope that the report can be a useful resource for policy-makers in Africa as they work to strengthen intra-regional trade and economic integration. I look forward to hearing your views on the findings of the report as well as its policy recommendations, and wish you fruitful deliberations.

Thank you very much.