

UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT

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

Speaker: European Union

Thursday, 19 September 2013

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European Union

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UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT

**60th SESSION TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT BOARD
16-27 September 2013**

EU Statement

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TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT BOARD

60th Session

(Geneva, 16-27 September 2013)

Item 6

**Economic development in Africa:
Intra-African trade: Unlocking private sector dynamism**

Mr President,
Secretary General,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,

I'm speaking on behalf of the European Union and its Member States. Mr. President, let me congratulate you first on your election.

We thank the Secretariat for its 'Economic Development in Africa Report 2013: Intra-African Trade: Unlocking Private Sector Dynamism' and recognise the analytical work of UNCTAD in this area.

1. International trade remains an important part of any strategy for economic growth and development. In relation to Intra-African trade, we note the African Union, and its regional organisations' ambitious plans to address infrastructure bottlenecks and trade facilitation with the Boosting Intra-African Trade Action Plan (BIAT).

2. Intra-African trade flows currently only make up 11% of African trade. Better connection to regional markets offers real opportunities for economic development within Africa. In addition, reducing bottlenecks in intra-African trade would allow for greater integration into global and regional value chains. With this regard we would also like to underline the relevant and sustainable gains that African trade and therefore African economies could benefit from a trade facilitation deal at the upcoming WTO Ministerial Conference in Bali.

3. Many instruments to help Africa to trade more are in place, they need to be better utilised. The EU and its MS stress the importance of coordination between partners, developed and developing, to enhance existing synergies and maximise the use of existing resources.

4. The private sector is a key interlocutor and stakeholder, with great potential for fostering meaningful public-private dialogue, as investors are essential to identifying new and innovative opportunities. Investment in education and vocational training – improving the quality of the domestic labour force - can also provide significant competitive advantages: particularly in the case of service and IT sectors. We highlight the importance of developing a transparent, legal and regulatory framework to help to promote SMEs investments and attract increased Foreign Direct Investment as recommended by the World Investment Report.

5. Regional value chains can be an effective springboard towards better connection to global value chains, especially for first-time exporters. We urge the UNCTAD Secretariat look at ways at utilising the analysis and recommendations made in this report, in conjunction with ITC, for African exporters.

6. The negotiation of EU's Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) with African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries and regions are a good example of the EU drive to support both regional integration and integration into the world economy, including exports to the European Single Market. The EPAs expressly aim to stimulate ACP intra-regional trade, and not just trade with the EU. The EU is currently negotiating with several African regions at different stages. Eastern and Southern Africa (ESA - Zimbabwe, Mauritius, Madagascar, the Seychelles) is already implementing an EPA.

Mr President

7. The EU and its MS are committed to support our African partners to enhancing intra-African trade, to building capacity and to diversifying their economies so they can attain sustainable economic growth. This represents a challenging way ahead which requires innovative thinking. We commend UNCTAD's efforts in this area, which the EU and its Member States continue to support.

Thank you.