



United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

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Trade and Development Board

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Agreed conclusions*

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

(Agenda item 6)

The Trade and Development Board

1. *Recognizes* the importance of intra-African trade in the economic development of Africa and underscores the renewed political commitment by African leaders to boosting intra-African trade, as reflected in decisions of African Heads of State and Government at the African Union Summit held in Addis Ababa in January 2012;

2. *Welcomes* the UNCTAD secretariat's *Economic Development in Africa Report 2013* subtitled "*Intra-African Trade: Unlocking Private Sector Dynamism*";

3. *Takes note* of the main message of the Report – that intra-African trade presents opportunities for sustained growth and development, and job creation – and stresses that seizing these opportunities requires, inter alia, unlocking private sector dynamism and adopting a development-based approach to regional integration;

4. *Notes* that despite some economic growth, intra-African trade remains low relative to the continent's trade potential and compared with other continents' intra-regional trade. There has been a significant decrease in the share of intra-African trade relative to African world trade over the past two decades;

5. *Recognizes* that the poor quality of infrastructure, lack of structural transformation, inadequate access to credit, political instability, lack of a conducive business environment, uneven implementation of regional trade agreements and in some cases limited private sector involvement in the regional integration process are some of the major obstacles to boosting intra-African trade;

* This document was distributed in the room as a non-paper.

6. *Acknowledges* that the private sector has a crucial role to play in boosting intra-African trade and stresses the need for regular dialogue between the State and the private sector and for the latter to be an active participant in the regional integration process;

7. *Considers* that promoting entrepreneurship and building supply-side capacities are vital to enhancing the capacity of domestic enterprises to produce and export goods and in this regard, encourages African governments to strengthen private sector development through, among other things, improving infrastructure, developing human capacity, enhancing access to credit and simplifying procedures as well as laws and regulations governing businesses;

8. *Further considers* that improving the productive capacity and competitiveness of Africa is one of the important means to achieve sustainable development. Intra-African trade should be promoted by a State that plays an active role in economic development and supported by an enabling environment at all levels to advance national development objectives;

9. *Stresses* the need for better distribution of the benefits of regional trade across African countries, and for intra-African trade to be used as a stepping stone towards effective integration into the global economy;

10. *Encourages* Africa's development partners to continue and where possible, to strengthen support for regional integration in Africa as an important step towards enhancing competitiveness, creating employment and reducing poverty in Africa;

11. *Requests* UNCTAD, within its mandate and available resources, to continue its research and analysis on Africa's development issues and to strengthen the developmental impact of its activities through the three pillars of UNCTAD, and encourages UNCTAD to continue its collaboration with, among others, the African Union Commission, the Economic Commission for Africa and other relevant international organizations.
