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STATEMENT BY

**H.E. ERASTUS J. O. MWENCHA
DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON, AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION**

**AT THE TENTH MEETING OF THE REGIONAL COORDINATION
MECHANISM OF UN AGENCIES AND ORGANISATIONS WORKING IN
AFRICA TO SUPPORT THE AFRICAN UNION AND ITS NEW
PARTNERSHIP FOR AFRICA'S DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME**

ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA: 5-6 NOVEMBER, 2009

Your Excellency Dr. Asha-Rose Migiro, Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations

Mr. Aboulie Janneh, Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa

Dr. Ibrahim Assane Mayaki, Chief Executive Officer, New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) Secretariat

Representatives of the United Nations System

Representatives of International and Regional Organizations

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

It is a great honor and privilege for me this morning to welcome you all to the Tenth Meeting of the Regional Coordination Mechanism (RCM) taking place here at the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. In particular, let me extend a warm welcome to Dr. Asha-Rose Migiro, Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations, to this meeting; to Addis Ababa and indeed back home to Africa. We are indeed pleased to have in our midst, Dr. Ibrahim Assane Mayaki, the new Chief Executive Officer of the NEPAD Secretariat. Deputy Secretary General, we very much appreciate your presence with us today and as they say in Swahili – Karibu sana nyumbani.

Allow me to also thank, our host the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), and also doubling as the RCM Secretariat for organizing and hosting this important meeting. Let me also take this

opportunity to sincerely thank all the UN Agencies and Organizations working in Africa in support of the African Union and its NEPAD Programme. Your presence here today in large numbers is highly commended and demonstrates the commitment all three of our organizations have to realization of this vision of the African Union and the significant momentum that has been achieved in recent years on the part of UN Agencies and Organizations to accelerate support to the African Union and its NEPAD programme and improve the functioning of the RCM, which today is reflected in the new nomenclature adopted for this fora in which '*Regional Coordination Mechanism*', replaces '*Regional Consultation Mechanism*'. This change of nomenclature is in the spirit of improving our coordination and joint working in our efforts to develop the African Continent.

Excellencies

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

This year's meeting is indeed very timely; unlike previous meetings of the RCM, this year does not centre on a specific theme. Rather, it is taking place during a time of considerable change. Change in relations between the AU and the UN System within the context of the review of the UN 10-Year Capacity Building Programme to the AU. Institutional and operational changes within the AU in the context of the new AU Strategic Plan (2009-2012) and its adoption and embodiment of a Results Based Management (RBM) approach to organizational delivery. There are also changes within the NEPAD

Secretariat and between the AU and the NEPAD Secretariat in the context of NEPAD integration into the structures and processes of the AU arising from the decisions taken by NEPAD Heads of State and Government Implementation Committee (HSGIC), at their 21st meeting held in Sirte, in June 2009.

In view of the forgoing, this year's RCM marks an opportunity for the African Union Commission (AUC) and the NEPAD Secretariat alike to present an update to this meeting on the progress that has been made in these areas in order for RCM members to garner a better understanding of the implications of these new realities and to better respond to the needs of the AU and its NEPAD programme.

It cannot be understated that the African Union has made significant strides in recent years to strengthen its capacities and its ability to deliver on its mandate. This has in no doubt been facilitated through the various support rendered by the UN Agencies and Organisations in various areas. Notably, collaboration on and financing of various programmes and studies such as the UN-AU joint Peace and Security mission in Darfur and Somalia, Assessing Regional Integration In African (ARIA) series, Economic Reports on Africa, the African Statistical Report and the 2007 'Rationalisation of the RECs, Review of the Abuja Treaty and Elaboration of a Minimum Integration Programme' (MIP). Funded by the UNDP, the study contributed substantially towards our efforts to accelerate, better coordinate and rationalise the integration of the African Continent, paving the way for the recently adopted Minimum Integration Programme (MIP),

produced in collaboration with the Regional Economic Communities (RECs). The MIP constitutes Africa's own convergence programme towards integration at a regional and Continental level, while being cognisant of the principle of variable geometry. Further, it should also be mentioned that UN support has enable AU to strengthen its capacity by assisting in the acquisition of equipment as well as the secondment of personal.

Excellencies

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

At this juncture, let me take a moment to briefly touch you on progress to integrate the NEPAD Secretariat into the structures and processes of the African Union. As you will note from detailed report to be presented, progress has been made. These include, amongst others, the recruitment of a new NEPAD Chief Executive Officer by the Commission in January 2009. A study to inform the integration process was completed in June 2009. The report will be considered by HSGIC at its next meeting in January 2010 at which a decision on integration will be taken. In the meantime consensus was reached and implementation started a number of areas. These include, amongst others: the establishment of the NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency [NPCA], as a successor to the NEPAD Secretariat and Chairperson of the AU Commission shall exercise supervisory authority over the NPCA, whilst giving the new Agency

adequate and necessary flexibilities to carry out its mandate and core function.

Furthermore, the AU Commission and the NEPAD Secretariat have continued to work closely together on the implementation of necessary integration activities, such as AUC/NEPAD budget harmonization and integration into the overall AU budgeting process; the adoption by the NEPAD Secretariat of AU financial rules and regulations and staff rules and regulations; the convening of sectoral harmonization workshops and the issuance of AU laissez-passer to relevant NEPAD staff. Efforts have also been made to improve coordination and joint working in our interface with development partners. A NEPAD Coordination Unit is to be established in the office of the AUC Chairperson. The Unit will serve as an interface and interlocutor between the AU Commission and the NEPAD Secretariat during and after the integration progress, an recruitment for the Unit is currently underway.

Despite the progress made, more work needs to be done. There is a need to develop effective mechanisms to institutionalise well coordinated and harmonised implementation of the NEPAD vision and AU Strategic Plan, within the NEPAD Secretariat and AU Commission, respectively. Further, there is need to capacitate and strengthen the NEPAD Coordination Unit in the Office of the AUC Chairperson so as to be fully functional and be able to effectively deliver on its mandate. It is also imperative to ensure the timely

completion of the integration process in all areas, such as finance, human resources, procurement, protocol and the transfer of relevant AU systems to the NEPAD Secretariat. While also ensuring harmonisation and coordination between the NEPAD Secretariat and the AU Commission on key strategic issues affecting the Continent.

Excellencies

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

The RCM provides an opportunity for all of us gathered here today, to come together through the cluster system to build on achievements and address development challenges facing the Continent including our institutional development so as to be able to more than adequately serve the needs of the African Continent and its people. I am made to understand that out of the 9 clusters that were established, only two are functioning well. Through our deliberations today and tomorrow, it is our hope that we can reach a deeper understanding of the various institutional changes that are taking place, their implications on UN support to the AU and its NEPAD programme and agree on joint activities that can be implemented to address Africa's many pressing development challenges and opportunities including the attainment of regional and Continental integration, the Millennium Development Programme (MDGs), Climate change, the food, fuel and economic and global financial crises, sustainable poverty reduction and economic and social development as well as make concrete proposals on a new UN 10 Year Capacity Building Programme based

on the new AU Strategic Plan and priorities contained therein. And equally important is to gain insights on how the RCM can serve as an effective vehicle for mobilization and coordinating UN support to the AU and its NEPAD programme in light of these new realities.

With these few remarks, I wish to reiterate that now is the time for action. And in being action orientated, the AU and the NEPAD Secretariat are turning a significant corner in this regard, both in their working, institutional and organizational relations and development, so as to ensure tangible and effective results based delivery on Africa's development agenda. Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, I wish you successful deliberations.

I thank you for your kind attention.