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**JOINT MEETING OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY SECOND COMMITTEE
AND THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL**

“Illicit Financial Flows and Development Financing in Africa”

**UN – DESA and UNCTAD
United Nations Headquarters
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Statement by

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**Mr. President,
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen**

With the anticipation of the eventual adoption of the post 2015 development agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as successors to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and with the advent of the third international conference on financing for development (FFD3) addressing the persistent challenge of illicit financial flows (IFF) became compelling on the global level. Dealing with IFF became especially more pressing for developing countries as the task of financing SDGs loomed in the horizon. Addressing IFF was particularly even more urgent to Africa as official development assistance (ODA) continued to disappoint and foreign development investment (FDI) persisted in eschewing Africa. In addition domestic resource mobilization (DRM) still leaves ample room for improvement to realize full potential. All these combined let to financing a gap which has often been closed with external borrowing; thus exacerbating already heavy external indebtedness.

Prospect of financing needs of African Agenda 2063 (the First Ten Year Implementation Plan) have added pressure. Dealing with IFF at the global level is clearly a topical issue that can no longer be swept under the carpet. It has to be faced headlong systematically

and expeditiously. It is a global challenge that needs global response. To contain it effectively requires international collaboration.

IFF is massive, growing and very complex as well as dynamic. It is multifaceted and tends to mutate. It is a hydra; a labyrinth. It is attributable to some commercial activities, criminal behavior and corrupt practices. Reports indicate that the bulk of it is attributable to transnational corporations, especially in the extractive industry.

Africa is by far the greatest loser comparatively. IFF from Africa composes a much larger percentage of her GDP than any other region. Yet Africa's financing needs are enormous, given the challenge of implementing Agenda 2063. Africa is aspiring for transformative economic growth, eradication of all forms of poverty and human development. This will require high, sustained and stable as well as inclusive economic growth characterized by equitable distribution of income and wealth. Given current level of development in most of Africa, where there are still over 30 least developed countries and several lower middle income countries, economic rate of at least 7 per cent in real terms is what will bring about economic transformation. Enhanced productive capacities, competitiveness, diversification and value addition will bring about that sought after economic transformation. This, according to Agenda 2063, requires:

- Infrastructure development, hard and soft, in its broad context, and energy generation;
- Improvement in quantity and quality of production in the agricultural sector;
- Boosting science, technology and innovation for development (technology development, transfer and diffusion);
- Increased investment in human capital with emphasis on health, education and training with special emphasis on skills development;
- Accelerated industrialization (which is still the leading jobs creator);
- Growth of the services sector in quantity and quality;
- Renewed impetus on integration (which creates economies of scale opportunities and ensure efficient allocation of factors of production);
- Nurturing African private sector development (private sector does most extraction, diversification; value addition and distribution and creates jobs as well as contribute to the tax base)
- Joining sub – regional, regional and international supply chains through trade;

Agenda 2063 has twelve “quick wins” or fast track projects/programmes. These are:

- Realizing integrated high speed train network;
- Developing E – Network in the continent;
- Speedy implementation of implementing open skies decision of 2002 in Yamoussoukro;

- Achieving deliberate progress in implementing the Grand Inga Dam hydro power project;
- Allowing free intra – Africa people movement culminating with the introduction of the African passport;
- Silencing the guns by 2020;
- Devising and implementing commodities strategy (value edition and diversification);
- Convening periodic high level African stakeholders forum;
- Accelerating establishment of continental financial institutions;
- Progressing with the establishment of the Continental Free Trade Area (CFTA) to meet 2017 target date;
- Developing Africa Outer Space strategy;
- Giving new impetus to the growth of Africa Virtual E – University;

Enablers, such as good governance, have been duly considered. Similarly cross – cutting considerations such as gender parity and women empowerment; engagement of youth in economic activity and inclusion of people living with disabilities in the work place have been duly factored in.

Implementation of Agenda 2063 is highly likely to succeed because due attention has been paid to avoid pitfalls of the past that led to delays in the implementation of the previous frameworks. These include:

- Bottom up approach that has ensured inclusion/participation, ownership and commitment by the public, private and civil society sectors;
- The framework is based on firm foundations and commitments that include constitutive act, existing continental and regional frameworks, initiatives and programmes, resolutions and national strategic frameworks and action plans (harmony or alignment and coherence are thus achieved);
- It is to be implemented by the public, private and civil society sectors, not just governments;
- It is to be implemented at national, sub – regional and continental levels;
- The 20 goals of the First Ten Year Implementation Plan, targets and indicators, are clear, enabling results based management and mounting of a credible accountability framework.
- Risk analysis and risk management strategy been duly addressed.
- Required capacity to realize the First Ten Year Implementation Plan has been assessed and strategies to close any capacity gaps have been devised.
- Domestication process of the Implementation Plan at national and sub-regional (RECs) levels will ensure integration of the content of Agenda 2063 into national and sub-ragional strategic and action plans;
- Effective communications strategy is in place;
- Means of implementation have been duly considered. This brings us to IFF.

It should be pointed out that the 17 goals adopted by the General assembly on September 25, 2015, are fully encapsulated in the 20 goals of the African Agenda 2063. Thus agenda 2063 is viewed as Africa's vehicle or instrument for implementing SDGs. By pursuing successful implementation of Agenda 2063 Africa will automatically be meeting her global obligations regarding SDGs.

While ODA would be welcome for financing Agenda 2063 it remains an unpredictable source of funding. Despite pledges made in Paris followed by Rome and then back to Paris, and onward to Accra and later Busan and Mexico City, under the auspices of Global Partnership for Effective Development Co – operation, ODA remains unpredictable, selective and heavy on conditionalities stifling policy space. Often commitments made are not met. Agenda 2063 is thus not pinning its hopes on ODA.

Philanthropy, which played a substantial role in financing MDGs, is discretionary by nature.

It would be a welcome but still precarious source of funding SDGs through Agenda 2063.

FDI has been side-stepping Africa despite generous incentives offered by African countries.

The only source of financing Agenda 2063 implementation, which is under the control of the African Union member states, is domestic resource mobilization (DRM). Much work needs to be done yet in order to fully realize the potential of DRM in African countries. IFF further complicates the situation. Tax bases are eroded, leading to deficits and authorities resorting to external borrowing worsening sovereign debt problems in many cases. Domestic financial markets are distorted and drained of resources. Financial deepening becomes a problem. Fiscal and financial imbalances develop and linger. Allocation of investments are rendered inefficient. Inequalities in the distribution of income and wealth are made worse. Hence deep concern by the African Union regarding IFF in the face of having to finance Agenda 2063.

The international community at large expressed concern as evidenced by the G-8 leaders summit in June 2013 in Lough Erne, Northern Ireland. G20 followed suit. So did OECD but with differential rigor among members. IFF gave birth to bodies such as Extractive Industry Transparency International (EITI).

UNCTAD tackled the issue in the Trade and Development Report of 2014 and in World Investment Report of 2015. UN Global Compact has been in dialogue with the African players in combating IFF. Outcome document of FFD3, paragraph 24 calls for action by member states to stem out IFF by 2030. This is the entry point for the UN machinery to act. Reference is being made here to ECOSOC/ UN DESA and to the Second Committee of the GA.

The same way that Africa took the lead in the formulation on P2015 DA and SDGs through Common African Position on P2015 DA, she has also done so in combating IFF. As early as 2011 the African Union formed the High Level Panel (HLP), led by H E Former President Thabo Mbeki, to probe IFF in Africa (i.e. mandated to discover the nature of IFF in Africa, identify the various forms that it takes and the institutions involved the extent of the challenge, the consequences and recommendations for action). The HLP issued a comprehensive and highly informative report. It listed fifteen revelations accompanied by thirty eight recommendations.

AU mandated AUC, UNECA and other Pan African organizations to continue to work with the HLP and to engage a broad spectrum of stakeholders, to devise strategies for implementing recommendations of the HLP. First meeting of AUC and UNECA was held in June 2015. In September 2015 AUC, UNECA, ACBF and Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA) co-organised the meeting with the HLP to engage key African stakeholders from Eastern and Southern Africa. It was a productive meeting with numerous useful inputs and specific recommendations reflected in the report. Concrete proposals were made. Similar meetings are to follow in other sub – regions. IFF in Africa is AU work in progress, through HLP (with technical support of AUC, UNECA and ACBF, OSIWA and others) and with guidance of the stakeholders. Other regions may learn a lot from the work done by AU on this subject so far.

It is going to be a long process to combat IFF. Earlier on I said it is complex/multifaceted. It is dynamic and even at times mutates. Some challenges can be overcome in the short term i.e. right away if there is resolve to do so. Others can deal with in the medium term and still others in the long term. IFF is global. Africa or any other region cannot effectively and fully tackle IFF on its own. It has to be a collaborative effort worldwide. UN is the relevant platform to mobilize global effort against IFF. Paragraph 24 of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda (AAAA) provides the basis for the Second Committee of the GA and for ECOSOC to enter the IFF arena legitimately.

May I urge the **Second Committee** to establish and appoint a committee of relevant experts to carry this endeavor of combating IFF forward at the global level. The committee so appointed could work towards developing an **action plan** on ways of stemming IFF out by 2030 or earlier. **ECOSOC** on its part should seriously consider activating the **Vienna Commission on Crime Prevention** and custodian of the Convention on Corruption to work towards producing a **global framework** for dealing decisively and resolutely with IFF globally. As an option it could be addressed in the form of a protocol to one of the existing relevant instruments.

Collectively, as was done with MDGs and about to be done through SDGs, fight against IFF can be won. IFF should remain at the centre of the radar screen of the Second Committee and of ECOSOC. Work on the subject should really pick up steam.

I thank you Mr. President and I thank you, Your Excellencies.

2015

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