

## Remarks

**by Mr Kossi Toulassi, Head of Industrialisation, Market Trade,  
Economic Analysis and Foresight Unit**

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Distinguished guests, esteemed colleagues, and valued participants,

It is my honor to introduce the AUDA-NEPAD Industrialisation, Trade & Markets, Economic Analysis and Foresight Division. The Economic Analysis and Foresight Unit being the cornerstone of our Africa Policy Bridge Tank Programme. As we gather here today, we are not just attending a conference, but actively participating in a broader strategy for long-term impact. This gathering is a unique opportunity for us all to share insights, collaborate, and collectively chart a course for the future.

In the face of today's dynamic economic shifts, geopolitical uncertainties, and unprecedented challenges, the importance of economic analysis and foresight thinking cannot be overstated. Our work is not only about understanding the current state of affairs but also about anticipating and preparing for what lies ahead.

Our achievements thus far serve as a testament to the power of informed decision-making, backed by rigorous research and analysis. The reports we have contributed to are not just documents; they are blueprints for the future, providing insights into the trends, challenges, and opportunities that will shape Africa's trajectory in the coming years.

We are committed to addressing complex global issues with a uniquely African perspective, as demonstrated by our work, through our programmes and projects.

HERE WILL INSERT A BIT ON THE DIVISIONS CURRENT PROGRAMMES.....

Regarding the Upscaled Trade Facilitation Program, it diligently supports the accelerated implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) as a critical game changer to propel the economic integration and diversification aspirations as stipulated in Agenda 2063. In doing so, the Program prioritises five main areas of interventions: I) stakeholder need assessment; II) accelerated trade facilitation & logistics; III) capacity development; IV) market access and expansion; and V) African trade analysis. Building upon the outstanding achievements attained thus far necessitates more effective partnership and synergies at all levels to attain our envisaged economic integration agenda.

The 100 million MSME Initiative, third pillar of the Energize Africa Initiative, seeks to empower African youth and women entrepreneurs through capacity building, financial access, and better trading capacities in order to increase commerce under the AfCFTA. The program is in line with Agenda 2063 and the SDGs, with the goal of elevating African MSMEs to the forefront of regional economies and sustainable development.

Tourism and Creative industries – AUDA-NEPAD is supporting African Union global strategy aiming at boosting the Creative and Tourism sector both recognized as key agents of development for the continent through impactful projects/programmes that

will empower all key actors, including small businesses, youth and women thus also linking back to Energize Africa strategic goals.

As we commence the conference, it is important to recognize that this gathering is not just a one-time event but an integral part of a broader strategy for long-term impact. The engagement provides a unique opportunity for you the participants from various sectors to come together, share insights, and collectively chart a course for the future. It is a platform for dialogue, collaboration, and the exchange of ideas that can lead to actionable outcomes.

The emphasis on economic analysis and foresight thinking is not just a theoretical concept but a practical necessity. In a world where change is the only constant, the ability to anticipate, adapt, and innovate becomes crucial for sustainable development. The AUDA-NEPAD Economic Analysis and Foresight Unit through its flagship programme, the Africa Policy Bridge Tank, is poised to play a pivotal role in shaping this narrative by leveraging its expertise and partnerships.

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Looking ahead, our focus is on leveraging the context and knowledge gained during this workshop to support Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and African member states. The actionable outcomes we seek are not merely theoretical propositions but tangible steps that can be integrated into policy frameworks and development plans. We aim to bridge the gap between knowledge production and implementation, ensuring that our insights lead to real-world impact.

In conclusion, I welcome each one of you to actively engage in the workshop deliberations. Your perspectives, expertise, and contributions are integral to the success of this initiative. As we explore the role and significance of the AUDA-NEPAD Economic Analysis and Foresight Unit, let us collectively emphasise the importance of economic analysis and foresight thinking in shaping Africa's future.

Thank you for your active participation, and I am sure that this workshop will significantly not only generate invaluable insights but also place us on a path to realizing the collective vision of Africa's future prosperity.

I now hand this segment to Pamela who will take us through what brings us here today the work and engagements with African Think Tanks, Academia, Policymakers and our valuable partners ....