

20 November 2014

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Sam Kahamba Kutesa,  
President of the 69<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Assembly,  
on Africa Industrialization Day 2014**

*Delivered by Ambassador Arthur Kafeero, Chef de Cabinet*

**Excellencies,  
Mr. Maged Abdelaziz, Under-Secretary-General and Special Adviser on Africa  
Ambassador Tete Antonio, Permanent Observer of the African Union to the United Nations  
Mr Paul Maseli, Director and Representative of UNIDO to the United Nations  
Distinguished Delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It is my great pleasure to join you here today to celebrate Africa Industrialization Day and deliver remarks on behalf of His Excellency, Mr. Sam Kutesa, President of the General Assembly.

The theme “Inclusive and Sustainable Industrial Development: African Agro Industry for Food Security” is indeed appropriate for this event. This theme highlights the importance of industrialization in accelerating the structural transformation and diversification of the economies of African countries to optimise productivity and employment opportunities.

**Esteemed Colleagues,**

Over the last decade, many African economies have sustained impressive rates of economic growth averaging 5%. This growth has been largely driven by creation of an enabling environment through sound macro-economic policies, increased domestic and foreign direct investment as well as export of natural resources and commodities.

Yet, in most African countries the economic growth attained has not yet resulted in adequate levels of poverty eradication.

Agriculture has remained the mainstay of many African economies and remains key to poverty reduction. It constitutes the backbone of many African economies.

There still remains limited progress in adding value to primary commodities and exploiting the opportunities for processed agro-food products in local, regional and international markets. While remarkable progress has been made in production, with many countries registering surpluses, a lot of the surplus is often wasted due to lack of processing capacity and marketing. This leads to low returns and the lack of adequate processing, impacts on the length of the stable shelf life of perishable commodities. This also leads to limited utilisation of food, impacting adversely on food security.

In order to enhance food security, it is essential that investments in agriculture go beyond improvements of on-farm productivity. Greater efforts and investments need to be devoted to development of post-production segments of agriculture value chains. Accelerated development of agro-industries will be an indispensable part of such a strategy. As these structural transformations take place, it is essential that policy makers give due attention to agricultural development, which employs 65% of Africa's workforce and generates one third of the continent's GDP. As highlighted in a recent World Bank report, GDP growth in agriculture is at least twice as effective in reducing poverty as growth in other sectors.

One of the key precursors for spurring sustained and inclusive economic growth for African countries will be industrialization, as it will improve productivity, value-addition and competitiveness.

Already, there have been notable efforts in African countries to pursue structural transformation of their economies.

Throughout Africa, agriculture has moved to the forefront of the development agenda at both the regional and national levels. The Africa Union Agenda 2063 underlines the need to consolidate the modernization of African agriculture and agro-business through scaled-up value addition and productivity. Through this initiative, African leaders are charting a 50-year transformative development framework for the realization of the AU's vision for an integrated, people-centred, prosperous, peaceful continent.

African leaders have reaffirmed their commitment to boost agricultural productivity through the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP). The African Union declared 2014 the African Year of Agriculture and Food Security. A growing number of countries have also formulated agricultural development strategies and adopted policies supporting agricultural development. Private sector investment in agriculture has also increased in many African countries.

### **Excellencies,**

As we formulate the post-2015 development agenda, it is essential to ensure that the interests of Africa, in the proposed Sustainable Development Goals, are supported. In this regard, the means of implementation for the post-2015 development agenda, in terms of financial resources, technology development and transfer must be ambitious and adequate.

The Common African Position (CAP) on the Post-2015 Development Agenda should continue to guide Africa's engagement in the ongoing deliberations on the post-2015 development agenda. It will contribute to galvanizing political will and international commitment for a universal development agenda, focused on the eradication of poverty and the achievement of sustainable development as its overarching objectives.

To accelerate industrialization, it will be essential to improve productivity and address the infrastructure deficits, especially energy, roads, railways, ports and air connectivity.

Interventions in Agro Industry Development in collaboration with the Private Sector will be essential in, designing and creating agro-processing industries, capable of creating jobs and increasing incomes.

Enhancing regional cooperation and integration will also be essential, as it facilitates better mobilization of resources for infrastructure development, creates bigger markets, and reduces trade barriers, all of which help to stimulate productivity and competitiveness.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

As the international community looks to the future, now is an opportune time to accelerate industrialization in order to harness Africa's vast potential into tangible benefits to improve the livelihoods of the continent's over one billion people.

I am confident that with our concerted efforts, we can turn the dream of Africa's illustrious Statesman, the late President Nelson Mandela into reality and create an Africa where there is "work, bread, water and salt for all".

I thank you for your kind attention.