
**SPEAKING NOTES
FOR
HIS EXCELLENCY WAMKELE MENE
SECRETARY-GENERAL, AfCFTA SECRETARIAT**

SPECIAL REMARKS ON THE AfCFTA

**CORPORATE COUNCIL ON AFRICA'S (CCA)
17TH U.S.-AFRICA BUSINESS SUMMIT**

**LUANDA, ANGOLA
JUNE 23, 2025**

Your Excellencies, African Heads of State,

Senior U.S. Government Officials,

Excellencies,

Distinguished Guests,

Colleagues,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. Thank you for this opportunity to address the Corporate Council on Africa's 17th U.S.-Africa Business Summit; an important platform for advancing U.S.-Africa economic engagement.
2. I commend the Corporate Council on Africa for its consistent efforts over the years in promoting stronger trade ties and deepening economic cooperation between our two regions. Your work has helped build lasting partnerships, encouraged constructive dialogue, and created the space needed to realize new opportunities for trade, investment, and shared prosperity.
3. In a world of deepening geopolitical shifts and disrupted supply chains, the U.S.-Africa economic partnership is a strategic imperative. While the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) has supported mutually beneficial trade for over two decades, recent policy uncertainties have generated concern across the continent and risk slowing the momentum of regional economic integration.
4. As we accelerate the implementation of the AfCFTA and deepen continental economic integration, ensuring continuity and predictability in trade programs like AGOA is essential. This moment calls for decisive and constructive U.S.-Africa engagement, one that reinforces global trade stability, opens new avenues for sustainable development, and built on principles of fairness, mutual respect, and a form of reciprocity that recognizes differing levels of development while fostering shared responsibility.
5. Africa is creating a new economic path. Since the operationalization of the African Continental Free Trade Area in January 2021, we have launched

coordinated initiatives aimed at transforming the continent's economic architecture.

6. This ambitious undertaking lies at the heart of our efforts to build a more integrated, competitive, and industrialized Africa; one capable of creating jobs, attracting investment, and delivering broad-based prosperity as our population doubles. Combined with shifts in global supply chains, these developments present significant new trade and investment opportunities for both African and U.S. firms.
7. Now in its fifth year, with 49 State Parties and counting, the AfCFTA is laying the foundation for transformational, trade-led growth across the continent. With combined consumer and business spending projected to reach \$6.7 trillion by 2030 and \$16.1 trillion by 2050, it presents a unique and timely opportunity for U.S. businesses seeking scale, resilience, and long-term returns.
8. To fully seize these opportunities, we must deepen collaboration across key growth sectors. From agribusiness, finance, digital infrastructure, and healthcare to critical minerals and clean energy, Africa is increasingly positioned as a driver of global growth. U.S. firms bring world-class capabilities, while African economies offer expanding markets, a youthful workforce, and strong regional ambition. By aligning U.S. innovation and capital with Africa's transformation agenda, we can achieve long-term economic value for our two regions.
9. Africa's economic future cannot depend on trade alone; production must be at the centre of our strategy. Our aim is to add value to natural resources, expand manufacturing capacity, and generate decent, sustainable jobs across the continent. The AfCFTA is accelerating this shift by strengthening regional value chains, improving logistics, and addressing the barriers that have long fragmented our markets.
10. With the right mix of financing, technology transfer, and policy coordination, U.S.-Africa partnerships can help build resilient industries that serve African consumers and compete on global terms. This is how we transition from

exporting raw materials to exporting finished goods, and from growth to transformation.

11. As you well know, Africa possesses vast renewable energy potential, from abundant solar, wind, and hydro resources, to critical minerals vital for the global clean energy transition. Strategic partnerships in this space must focus on investment in sustainable energy infrastructure, green industrialization, and the development of responsible, transparent value chains.
12. We also have an opportunity to operationalize the green investment principles embedded in the AfCFTA Protocol on Investment, and to advance initiatives such as the Africa Green Industrialisation Initiative (AGII), which aims to position Africa as a global hub for green manufacturing through value addition to its mineral wealth. These actions support global climate goals while helping build future-proof industries on the continent.
13. Africa's greatest asset is its people, especially its youth. With a median age under 20 and rapidly expanding digital connectivity, the continent is emerging as a global centre for innovation, entrepreneurship, and creative industries. To realize this potential, we must invest in education, skills development, and digital infrastructure, while also ensuring that women and youth have effective access to finance, markets, and leadership opportunities.
14. Africa's tech-savvy population is driving a digital revolution. With high mobile penetration and a growing network of innovation hubs, the continent is well positioned to leapfrog traditional development systems. Collaboration in digital infrastructure, e-commerce, cybersecurity, and data governance will open new efficiencies in trade, enhance service delivery, and integrate African businesses into the global digital economy.
15. This is the moment to match Africa's ambition with transformative partnerships anchored in mutual respect, shared priorities, and a long-term commitment to inclusive prosperity. With new leadership in the United States, we have a renewed opportunity to redefine the terms of U.S.-Africa economic engagement, broadening the focus from aid to investment, and from transactional exchanges to long-term partnership.

16. A prosperous and integrated Africa will benefit not only the continent but the U.S. and the rest of the world. That is why we must work together to strengthen regional integration while advancing the green and digital transitions that are reshaping our economies and societies.
17. In this era of the AfCFTA, the conditions for a more dynamic and mutually beneficial partnership are firmly in place. The AfCFTA provides the strategic framework, Africa's economic momentum offers the opportunity, and U.S.-Africa collaboration can deliver impactful outcomes.
18. Through our collective efforts, guided by clarity, purpose, and mutual respect, we can write a new and impactful chapter in U.S.-Africa economic relations, one that delivers lasting and shared prosperity for all.

Thank you.