



REPUBLIC OF THE GAMBIA

EMBASSY TO ETHIOPIA & HIGH COMMISSION TO KENYA

PERMANENT MISSION TO THE AFRICAN UNION & UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

Statement for Minister for Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation and Gambians Abroad, Honourable Dr Mamadou Tangara on behalf of

H.E. Adama Barrow, President of the Republic of The Gambia during the Opening Ceremony of the Fifth African Business Forum for Investing in Multimodal Transport Infrastructure to Support the Afcfta

Your Excellency, Julius Maada Bio, President of the Republic of Sierra Leone

Your Excellency, Mohammed Bazoum, President of the Republic of Niger

Your Excellency, Mokgweetsi Masisi, President of the Republic of Botswana

Your Excellency, Vera Songwe, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive
Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa

Your Excellency, Dr. Amani Abou-Zeid, Commissioner for Infrastructure and Energy, African
Union Commission

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

I am delighted for the invitation extended to me by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa Secretariat to participate in this important Forum and deliver an introductory address on behalf of H.E. Adama Barrow, President of the Republic of The Gambia. I thank the organisers for coming up with such a wonderful initiative for the stakeholders in the African development agenda to elaborately reflect and share insightful perspectives on investing in a Multimodal Transportation Infrastructure for the effective implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area.

As exemplified by the unprecedented commitment at the highest levels of the political governance of the continent, the AfCFTA is a manifestation of a historic intent to build a solid trade infrastructure. It is one of the single most ambitious and practical undertakings made through the African Union in advancing the course of Regional Integration. We are confident that this instrument of enhanced intra-African trade will promote substantial economic growth, structural transformation and industrialization of African economies. These, therefore, commit all stakeholders to vigorously push for the realization of the objectives of the AfCFTA; however, this will be unattainable in the absence of a robust transport infrastructure.

Consequently, as part of the national preparations to implement the Agreement, the Government of The Gambia has pursued diverse initiatives to consolidate its preparedness to fully harness the opportunities of the AfCFTA. This includes the formulation of the AfCFTA National Implementation Strategy through the technical support of the UNECA. This Strategy intends to leverage deeper integration within Africa and maximizes welfare gains through food security, boost trade and investment, support structural transformation and industrialization.

Also, the Strategy has identified the priority actions to be taken by the Government of The Gambia over the next ten years to realise the benefits of the AfCFTA; and identified the priority products for export, opportunities for regional value chain development and the measures to strengthen the Gambia's connectivity to the African continent.

Indeed, there is a strong correlation between increased industrial productivity and diverse and efficient transportation infrastructure. As a result, road and maritime transport services, internal waterways transport and air transport for cargo, collectively continues to be a key priority in our National Development Plan (NDP). As a result, the Government of The Gambia continues to engage key development partners with a view of strengthening its domestic road, river, sea and air transportation networks to access the ECOWAS market.

Since the commissioning of the SeneGambia Bridge in 2019, we have seen improved connectivity between The Gambia and Senegal particularly in the movement of goods between the two sisterly

countries. Also, the Government of The Gambia is enhancing its engagements with its partners in the Republics of Sierra Leone and Guinea Bissau to explore more opportunities for trade and investments in the transport service sector.

Your Excellencies,

The AfCFTA State Parties must continue to strengthen their collaboration in supporting the development of road, sea, rail and air transport services to fully harness the AfCFTA. I, therefore, call on all the State Parties to take full advantage of the ongoing negotiations under the AfCFTA trade in services to create the right environment to enhance private sector investment in the transport service sector to improve multi-modal transport infrastructure.

In conclusion, I once again thank the organisers of this Forum and wish to express The Gambia's commitment to the development of our transport connectivity infrastructure. We will continue to strengthen our collaboration both with our development partners and the private sector to help achieve this needed locomotive to greater intra-African trade.

I thank you for your attention.