Amine Idriss Adoum
for African Union Commissioner for Economic Development, Tourism, Trade, Industry, and Mining

AFRICA FIRST:
A STRATEGY TO ACCELERATE AGENDA 2063 AND STRENGTHEN AFRICA'S ROLE IN THE WORLD

My vision:

Africa stands at a decisive turning point in its history. Agenda 2063, and more specifically, the Second Ten-Year Implementation Plan (2024-2033), provides a clear vision for an integrated, prosperous, and sovereign Africa. This ambitious program requires bold structural transformation, enhanced cooperation, and greater influence for Africa on the global stage. As Commissioner responsible for this portfolio, my unwavering commitment is to turn this vision into action, accelerating our continental integration, fostering industrialization, strengthening partnerships, and consolidating Africa's leadership in international institutions. My vision is deeply rooted in Ubuntu and Africa's philosophy of active solidarity, ensuring economic freedom, shared prosperity, and dignity for all Africans, including our diaspora.

A fundamental pillar of this strategy is working hand in hand with the Regional Economic Communities (RECs)—ECOWAS, EAC, SADC, COMESA, CEN-SAD, IGAD, ECCAS, UMA, as well as the African diaspora as the Sixth Region of the African Union. Strengthening these institutions is critical for accelerating the implementation of AfCFTA, AIDA, PIDA, AMV, Africa's Tourism Policy, and our regional value chains strategies. Through this coordinated approach, I will ensure that our RECs and Member States have the institutional strength, policy coherence, and technical expertise necessary to drive economic integration. This means working with them to enhance their governance, regulatory frameworks, and implementation capacity, allowing integration to deliver tangible benefits to businesses, industries, and citizens across the continent.

II. ACCELERATED INTEGRATION TO DRIVE THE SECOND TEN-YEAR IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

African integration is the foundation of economic and industrial transformation. The Second Ten-Year Implementation Plan outlines ambitious objectives to create a unified, competitive, and connected Africa. My mission is to ensure that integration moves beyond rhetoric and translates into real, measurable progress.

1. AfCFTA as the Engine of Economic Integration

The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) is the most significant lever for creating a single African market. I am committed to work closely and positively with ACFTA Secretariat to:

- Accelerating the elimination of tariff and non-tariff barriers to stimulate intra-African trade.
- Strengthening Member States' capacity in trade regulation and implementation of AfCFTA protocols.
- Harmonizing customs procedures and logistics to streamline trade operations.
- Deepening integration between North Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa, creating strong trade corridors between the Maghreb and the rest of the continent.

2. A Unified African Electricity Market to Boost Industrial Productivity

A competitive industrial sector cannot thrive without reliable and affordable energy. I will work closely with fellow Commissioners, African Union institutions, regional power pools, and national governments to accelerate the implementation of the African Single Electricity Market (AfSEM). This will include:

- Fast-tracking interconnection of regional electricity grids (SAPP, WAPP, EAPP, COMELEC, CAPP) .
- Scaling up renewable energy infrastructure to ensure sustainable energy supply.
- Accelerating Africa's energy transition, fully leveraging our solar, wind, and hydroelectric resources.

3. A Single African Air Transport Market

No meaningful integration can happen without robust transport and logistics infrastructure. The Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM) is a game-changer. My commitment is to:

- Boost intra-African air transport, reducing costs and enhancing connectivity.
- Facilitate trade and tourism by eliminating restrictions on air traffic rights .
- Support the emergence of strong, competitive African airlines, capable of competing globally.

From a trade perspective, I will actively champion the acceleration of SAATM, ensuring that logistics and movement of goods and people become enablers of trade, rather than obstacles.

4. Strengthening Intra-African Payment Systems

One of the biggest barriers to Africa’s integration is our fragmented financial system. I am committed to:

- Accelerating the implementation of the Pan-African Payment and Settlement System (PAPSS) to facilitate seamless transactions across the continent.
- Developing digital payment infrastructures that are interoperable between African nations.
- Encouraging the use of local currencies in intra-African trade, reducing reliance on external currencies.

5. Supporting Member States in Strengthening Institutional Capacities

Sustainable integration requires strong institutions and competent governance. A key part of my mandate is to:

- Implement training programs for national and regional institutions, ensuring they have the expertise to execute Agenda 2063 initiatives.
- Support Member States in developing industrialization strategies aligned with the Second Ten-Year Implementation Plan.
- Provide technical and financial assistance to Member States to strengthen their economic governance frameworks.

II. INDUSTRIALIZATION AND DIGITALIZATION: KEYS TO AFRICAN ECONOMIC AUTONOMY

Africa must produce what it consumes and export what it produces. The twin engines of industrialization and digital transformation are crucial in achieving this goal.

1. Driving Africa’s Industrialization

Industrial corridors and special economic zones must be fully developed to strengthen Africa’s global competitiveness. My commitment includes:

- Implementing the African Mining Vision (AMV) to maximize Africa’s mineral wealth for industrial growth .
- Accelerating the development of industrial infrastructure to process raw materials locally.
- Enhancing collaboration among Member States to build cross-border value chains and invest collectively in manufacturing hubs.

2. Leveraging Digitalization and Artificial Intelligence

The world is entering a new technological era—Africa must not be left behind. To integrate digital transformation into our economic policies, I will:

- Establish AI innovation hubs and technology centers of excellence.
- Digitally optimize agricultural and industrial value chains, using AI and blockchain solutions .
- Ensure Africa’s digital sovereignty, investing in cybersecurity and robust tech infrastructure.

III. TOURISM AND CREATIVE INDUSTRIES: KEY SECTORS FOR AFRICA'S INFLUENCE

Tourism and the creative industries are underutilized economic engines. Africa's art, culture, and heritage must be strategically positioned as drivers of economic development.

1. Transforming Tourism into a Growth Engine

My commitment is to:

- Develop world-class tourism infrastructure designed for intra-African and global markets.
- Facilitate the free movement of African travellers, making travel across Africa seamless.
- Promote integrated pan-African tourism circuits, showcasing our unique heritage.

2. Promoting Africa's Creative Industries

Africa's creative potential must be fully unlocked. I will work to:

- Establish a structured African market for creative and cultural goods.
- Secure investment funds for audiovisual, music, and arts industries.
- Empower local artists and producers, ensuring they compete globally and retain the economic benefits of their creativity.

IV. STRENGTHENING AFRICA'S POSITION ON THE GLOBAL STAGE

Africa is now a permanent member of the G20 through the African Union, offering an unprecedented opportunity to shape global economic policies.

1. Enhancing Coordination of Africa's Positions within the G20

As Commissioner leading African Union coordination within the G20, I will:

- Establish a unified mechanism for articulating Africa's positions in global negotiations.
- Strengthen the negotiation skills of African representatives in multilateral discussions.
- Ensure Agenda 2063 remains central in shaping Africa's global partnerships.

2. Strengthening Strategic Partnerships

Africa must redefine its engagement with global partners:

- FOCAC: Strengthening China-Africa investments in critical sectors.
- TICAD: Enhancing industrial and technological collaboration with Japan.
- Africa-EU Partnership: Rebalancing trade relations for shared prosperity.
- Africa-U.S. Relations: Expanding economic opportunities through AGOA and investment facilitation.


V. CONCLUSION: THE TIME TO ACT IS NOW

Africa's transformation depends on action, not just vision. As Commissioner, I am fully committed to accelerating the implementation of all African Union continental frameworks—AfCFTA, AIDA, PIDA, AMV, Africa's Tourism Policy, and regional value chain strategies.

This mission cannot succeed without the African diaspora, which must be a central pillar of our development strategy. The African Institute for Remittances (AIR) must be revitalized to channel remittances into productive investments, while we create innovative financial mechanisms that align public and private sector efforts to finance Africa's rise.

The time for bold leadership is now. Africa needs vigor, passion, ethics, and an unshakable belief that Africa above all is to be lived, built, and advanced. The moment is ours—let's seize it together.