



REPUBLIC OF KENYA
MINISTRY OF INVESTMENTS, TRADE AND INDUSTRY

OFFICE OF THE PRINCIPAL SECRETARY

OPENING REMARKS FOR USE BY THE PRINCIPAL SECRETARY

During the AfCFTA 4th Meeting of the Sub-Committee on Technical Barriers to Trade and Workshop on Mutual recognition Agreements of Conformity Assessments Results at Radisson Blu Hotel-Upper Hill Nairobi on 8th July 2025

Salutations;

Ms. Poonam (D) Mohun: Head of Non-Tariff Measures-AfCFTA Secretariat

Dr. Oswald Chinyamakobvu: Senior Technical Advisor – Quality Infrastructure:
African Union Commission

Dr. Henry Rotich: Chairperson: Pan African Quality Infrastructure (PAQI)

Distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen

1. It is with great pleasure and gladness that I join you this morning in this workshop on Mutual Recognition Agreement (MRA) for Mutual Acceptance of Conformity Assessment Results, under the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). On behalf of the Government of Kenya and the Ministry of Investment, Trade and Industry, I welcome you all to Nairobi-Kenya.
2. I extend my appreciation to the Secretariat and welcome the decision of selecting Nairobi-Kenya to host this critical session. This decision is not only a mark of confidence in our country's commitment to continental integration, but a recognition of our leadership in advancing trade facilitation and quality infrastructure in Africa. We are deeply honoured and **Karibuni sana.**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

3. The AfCFTA is a landmark agreement, a historic turning point that presents us with a continental platform to unlock the immense potential of intra-African trade. However, removing tariffs alone will not guarantee the success we seek. We must also address Non-Tariff Barriers and align regulatory frameworks to ensure that goods, services, and professionals can move seamlessly across our borders. This is where the Mutual Recognition Agreement comes in.
4. The MRA provides a practical framework for recognizing the equivalence of conformity assessment results; be it testing, certification, inspection, or accreditation; issued in one jurisdiction and accepted in another. It is a game-changer for businesses, especially our Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), who often face duplicated procedures and costs when entering new markets. Multiple certification requirements was sited as one of the main challenges during the pilot phase of the Guided Trade Initiative. By embracing mutual recognition, we signal trust in one another's systems. We affirm our

belief in the capabilities and integrity of African institutions. We reduce trade costs, unlock efficiencies, and build confidence among exporters and importers alike.

Distinguished Delegates,

5. For Kenya, this agenda is not new. We have made Quality Infrastructure development and regulatory cooperation central to our national trade policy. Our National Quality Infrastructure institutions responsible for Standards, Measurements and Accreditation and Regulatory Agencies are committed to international best practices and are actively engaged in supporting capacity building to realize the value of the AfCFTA. Our commitment to the AfCFTA and its Protocols is unwavering. As a country, we are fully aligned with the vision of “One African Market,” and we are determined to play our part in turning that vision into reality.
6. Kenya Accreditation Services (KENAS) recent accreditation of the first Validation and Verification Body under the Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation (CORSA) and the Kenya Medical Practitioners and Dentists Council (KMPDC) as a person’s certification body, highlights our commitment to quality and safety across diverse sectors.
7. Kenya's partnerships, such as the strategic Memorandum of Understanding between KENAS and the African Organisation for Standardisation (ARSO) to strengthen accreditation for the ARSO Conformity Assessment Program (ACAP) and administer the ECOMARK (Made in Africa) Programme, directly aim to boost market access for African businesses, especially SMEs. This is the Africa we are actively working to build: an Africa that produces, processes, and trades with itself, underpinned by unwavering confidence and trust in its systems and institutions.

Distinguished Delegates

8. The AfCFTA Protocol on Trade in Goods, Article 8 on Annex 6 on Technical Barriers to Trade, explicitly requires **State Parties to promote the use of accredited conformity assessment bodies as a tool to facilitate trade amongst the State Parties; Promote the mutual acceptance of conformity assessment results from accredited Conformity Assessment Bodies which have been recognized under appropriate multilateral agreements between their respective accreditation bodies and the relevant mutual recognition arrangements of the AFRAC, ILAC and IAF as well as enhance confidence in**

the continued reliability of each other's conformity assessment results through, among others, peer reviews where appropriate etc.

9. And therefore, as we begin this technical session, I urge all of us to approach our discussions with clarity, collaboration, and a shared sense of urgency. The outcomes of this meeting will lay the foundation for deepening the already established cooperation and by extension, deeper economic integration across the continent.
10. Let me reaffirm Kenya's commitment to collaborate with the AfCFTA Secretariat and all stakeholders across the continent to realize a truly integrated African market, founded on principles of trust, quality, and shared prosperity. In my view, this is the way to unlock Africa's full potential to collectively build the Africa we want. An Africa that trades with itself, produces what it can consume and consumes what it produces.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

11. As I finish up, I wish to take this early opportunity to invite you all to enjoy our unmatched Kenyan hospitality and to visit our scenic tourist sites including the game park that is hardly 10km from this venue, to colour your stay. Kenya offers a unique blend of adventure, culture, and hospitality. Indulge in our culinary delights, explore our heritage, and engage with the warmth of our people. Take time to enjoy the Kenyan Experience because while you are here to work, we also want you to leave with memories that last a lifetime.
12. I Once again, thank you for choosing Kenya and with that, I now declare this technical session on the AfCFTA Mutual Recognition Agreement officially opened.
13. Thank you All and God bless Africa.