

**High Level Meeting on the Launching of the Natural
Resources Information Exchange-NRIE**

Statement

by

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Dr Supachai, Secretary-General of UNCTAD,

Dr Hamoudoum Touré, Secretary-General of ITU,

Honourable Ministers

Distinguished Ambassadors

Ladies and Gentlemen

On behalf of the ACP Secretariat, and on my own behalf, I would like to thank UNCTAD for inviting us to this very important event. First and foremost I would like to convey the apology of our Secretary General, Dr. Mohamed Chambas, who unfortunately could not be personally present here today due to other important commitments in Brussels.

The event we are launching today aims at assisting African countries in the management of their natural resources,

more precisely to facilitate their access to geo-scientific and other data related to the exploitation, transformation and commercialisation of natural resources.

Indeed, whilst it is universally recognised that Africa has the world's greatest resources of numerous mineral, it is equally acknowledged that most of Africa still lacks systematic geological mapping which could bring to light a much greater resource base.

It is also a fact that most of Africa's minerals are exported as ores, concentrates or metals, without significant value-addition. The same applies to various ACP countries.

Africa also has significant known resources of fossil fuels and has large biomass, bio-fuels and hydro-electric potential. In addition it has largely un-assessed geothermal potential along the Great African Rift Valley.

It is clear that the mining industry is potentially an important component in the wheel that is driving the fight against poverty and underdevelopment in our countries. There is therefore need for us to fully exploit this potential which in many of our states is still dormant.

The structural transformation of our economies must be an essential component of any long-term strategy to ensure the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). A resource-based industrialisation and development strategy must be rooted in the utilisation of our countries' significant resource assets, to catalyse diversified industrial growth, hence the socio-economic development.

However this is possible only in the presence of reliable information on mineral wealth. Indeed access to data is vital to help ACP countries, for instance to better:

- manage their natural resources;
- devise the appropriate policies for attracting investments; and
- negotiate better terms for the extraction of their resources, etc

We also note that the outcome of the activities related to NRIE implementation will be discussed at the forthcoming meeting of the 14th African Oil, Gas and Mines, Conference, to be held in Sao Tome and Principe on 21-25 November 2010.

In this regard, I would like to inform you of the forthcoming ACP Ministerial meeting on the Development of Mining Resources, which is scheduled to take place from 13 to 15 December 2010 in Brussels.

Clearly, there is need for all of us to coordinate our actions on this very important issue so that we can meaningfully

contribute to the development of the Mining Sector in our countries.

On our side, we look forward to the outcome of this platform which can serve as model for the whole ACP and reiterate our commitment to reinforce our collaboration with UNCTAD in this area.

On this note, I conclude my intervention and wish you all a successful ceremony