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STATEMENT BY H. E. ARC MOHAMMED NAMADI SAMBO, GCON, VICE PRESIDENT OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA, AT THE 3RD AFRICA-ARAB SUMMIT IN KUWAIT, STATE OF KUWAIT, 19TH – 20TH NOVEMBER 2013

PROTOCOL

I bring warm felicitations from the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, His Excellency, Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, GCFR, who is unable to be here today, due to some pressing state engagements. He directed me to extend his best wishes and express his hopes for a successful outcome of this important Summit.

2. Let me; on behalf of myself and the Nigerian delegation thank His Highness, the Amir of the State of Kuwait, Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaabir and the good people of Kuwait for the warm reception accorded to us, since our arrival in this beautiful city. This gesture bears testimony to the hospitality of the good people of this great country. I will also extend my appreciation to the organising committees for the elaborate arrangements.

Your Highnesses,

Your Excellencies,

3. Three years ago, we gathered in Tripoli, Libya for the 2nd Africa-Arab Summit. That Summit witnessed the rekindling of our commitment to the aspirations of the founding fathers of our Partnership when they met in Cairo, Egypt in 1977. They were driven by our shared experiences and they demonstrated determination to take advantage of the huge economic, social and political opportunities that were available to jointly work towards effective utilisation of our natural resources for the good of our peoples and the advancement of our common cultural heritage. Consequently, our meeting in Tripoli in 2010 set the tone for our future relationship, as stipulated in the Tripoli 2nd Plan of Action. It is for this reason that I consider the theme of the Summit today "Partners for Development and Investment" as very apt and timely.

Your Excellencies,

4. It is a fact that for centuries our people had enjoyed long period of social interaction and mutually beneficial commercial relationships. This was disrupted and here we are, once again on the verge of rekindling that relationship. It is time to focus on deployment by promoting investment and trade, taking advantage of progress in science and technology, especially ICT. In line with this focus of the Summit, I am glad to say that Nigeria has embarked on a Transformation Agenda to address factors militating against our growth. This includes areas of ensuring adequate power supply, addressing transportation in the areas of roads, railways, waterways, development of air and seaports, quality education, health, creation of job opportunities for the youth and women and agriculture. Therefore Africa-Arab partnership may consider supporting Africa's flagship projects, including the Programme for Infrastructure Development (PIDA) and the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP). Such support will go a long way in enhancing the development of road and rail infrastructure, water and energy, as well as Africa's quest to eliminate hunger and reduce poverty through agriculture.

6. It is time to take advantage of the abundant resources and opportunities existing in our two regions. We must encourage the private sectors from both continents to become beneficiaries of these opportunities by removing obstacles to improve person to person contacts and interactions between our private sectors. Our efforts should include the creation of enabling environment for trade and investment through institutional and legislative reforms, provision of liberal visa policies, and less cumbersome ways of profit repatriation, as well as the promotion of good governance, the rule of law, gender equality and the fight against corruption.

7. It is a fact that only limited progress has been made in the implementation of some of the goals of the Joint Plan of Action. Unfortunately, access to financing remains a major impediment to the speedy realisation of the set goals. It is for this reason that my delegation supports the establishment of the Africa-Arab Partnership Fund. The fund will play a critical role in revitalising the implementation of the Joint Action Plan.

Your Excellencies,

8. As we continue to seek ways of improving our economic relations, the challenges of insecurity have remained daunting and require a concerted and urgent response by all of us, individually and collectively. The preponderance of Small Arms and Light Weapons and their illicit transfer across our various borders have remained a huge challenge. Terrorist and other criminal agents have continued to benefit from the abundance of these illicit weapons to disrupt our efforts at better life for our people. We owe it to ourselves and peoples to undertake collective action to deal with the situation. One key important action will be to cut their sources of arms supply, as well as dealing with their finances.

9. Worthy of mention is the question of migrants, especially those of them in irregular status, and the imperative of effective collaboration to address the issue. The recent ship mishap, off the Island of Lampedusa and deaths in the Sahara desert in the area neighbouring Niger Republic, demand a concrete action between the two regions.

10. There is no doubt that while some African immigrants' ends up in the Middle East, including North Africa, most of them remain in transit for a long time. They constitute the manpower needed for our economic growth and development. The challenge is to remain committed to deal with the root causes of migration, and at the same time underscore the imperative of humane treatment to the migrants, especially those in transit, including respect for their human rights.

Your Highnesses,

Your Excellencies,

11. Let me conclude by stating our expectation for a very fruitful outcome. I am confident of our resolve to re-dedicate ourselves towards a stronger and vibrant Partnership, within the spirit of South-South Cooperation. Our countries and peoples should enjoy the dividends of economies of scale that exists in our countries, and also continue to share best practices, and information. Above all, this platform should serve as vehicle to address the perceived obstacles likely to inhibit our objectives of attaining greater socio-economic development, as well as to provide a rallying-point at multilateral levels.

I thank you for your kind attention.