

**HIS EXCELLENCY AMBASSADOR ALBERT MUCHANGA; COMMISSIONER FOR TRADE & INDUSTRY, AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION (AUC) DELIVERS PUBLIC LECTURE ON AFRICAN CONTINENTAL FREE TRADE AREA (AfCFTA); 3 DECEMBER, 2019**

On Tuesday, 3 December, 2019, the School of Social Sciences hosted a Public Lecture on the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) delivered by Ambassador Albert Muchanga, Commissioner for Trade and Industry at the African Union Commission (AUC). Ambassador Muchanga who was accompanied by his Personal Assistant, Ms Prudence Kabwe, was warmly welcomed to the University by the Vice Chancellor, Professor Dr. Hellicy Ng'ambi and Dean of the School of Social Sciences, Dr. Njunga-Michael Mulikita. After exchanging pleasantries and Ambassador Muchanga signing the Visitors Book in the Office of the Vice Chancellor, the Vice Chancellor, in her formal welcome remarks drew attention to the symbolic and sentimental significance of the location of Mulungushi University, at the Mulungushi Rock of Authority; cradle of continental integration and unity. She lauded the collective vision of founding African leaders, namely Kenneth D. Kaunda, founding President of the Republic of Zambia, late Julius Kambarage Mwalimu Nyerere of the United Republic Tanzania, and late Milton Obote first President of the Republic of Uganda in having established the Mulungushi Club in the 1960s. The Mulungushi Club evolved into a political and diplomatic platform to establish the Frontline States which later transitioned into the Southern African Development Community (SADC), PTA/COMESA etc thereby laying the institutional foundation for the African Economic Community (AEC) and the African Continental Free Area (AfCFTA)

In his Lecture, Ambassador Muchanga, a Zambian career diplomat, who has been the prime intellectual architect behind establishment of AfCFTA, meticulously traced the evolution of AfCFTA to founding Ghanaian leader; Dr. Kwame Nkrumah's laudable and inspiring vision of a prosperous, integrated and respected Africa. the Ambassador also scrutinized the dynamics of sub-regional integration in Africa by detailing the progress and challenges faced by sub-regional blocs namely; Southern African Development Community (SADC), Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), East African Community (EAC), Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU).

The Ambassador further contextualized the significance of the African Union Summit in Kigali, Rwanda which formally launched AfCFTA in 2018 and the African Union Summit in Niamey, Niger, 2019 which gave AfCFTA added impetus.

Ambassador Muchanga concluded his lecture by urging the Department of Economics in the School of Social Sciences to rapidly prepare a concept note proposing a book project on Africa's experience in regional integration. The Commissioner further counseled the Department to introduce a standalone course on African Economic Integration and he solemnly pledged to mobilize resources to bring these initiatives to fruition. The Ambassador's Lecture drew enthusiastic responses from both Academic staff members and students who raised pertinent observations and questions on AfCFTA. The Lecture ended on an auspicious with Moderator, Mr Daniel Mauzu, Head of the Department of Economics promising to follow up on the Ambassador's counsel.