

**DECISION ON BOOSTING INTRA-AFRICAN TRADE
AND FAST TRACKING THE CONTINENTAL FREE TRADE AREA
Doc. EX.CL/700(XX)**

The Assembly,

1. **TAKES NOTE** of the Report of the Commission on the Seventh Ordinary Session of the Conference of Ministers of Trade held in Accra, Ghana, from 29 November to 03 December 2011;
2. **RECOGNIZES** that the promotion of intra-African trade is a fundamental factor for sustainable economic development, employment generation and effective integration of Africa into the global economy;
3. **ENDORSES** the Framework, Road Map and Architecture for Fast Tracking the establishment of the Continental Free Trade Area (CFTA) and the Action Plan for Boosting Intra-African Trade, with the understanding that the High Level African Trade Committee (HATC) will provide a facilitating role and unlock any blockages that might arise and **REQUESTS** the Ministers responsible for the CFTA to report as appropriate to the Assembly, through the Executive Council, on progress;
4. **DECIDES** that the CFTA should be operationalized by the indicative date of 2017, based on the framework, Roadmap and Architecture, with the following appropriate milestones:
 - i) Finalization of the East African Community (EAC)- the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA)- Southern African Development Community (SADC) Tripartite FTA initiative by 2014;
 - ii) Completion of FTA(s) by Non-Tripartite RECs, through parallel arrangement(s) similar to the EAC-COMESA-SADC Tripartite Initiative or reflecting the preferences of their Member States, between 2012 and 2014;
 - iii) Consolidation of the Tripartite and other regional FTAs into a Continental Free Trade Area (CFTA) initiative between 2015 and 2016;
 - iv) Establishment of the Continental Free Trade Area (CFTA) by 2017 with the option to review the target date according to progress made.
5. **REQUESTS** Member States supported by the Commission and the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) to drive the process of boosting intra-African trade and the CFTA negotiations through the implementation of the short, medium and long-term programmes and activities contained in the Action Plan at the national, regional and continental levels;

6. **ALSO REQUESTS** the Commission, in collaboration with the RECs and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), to establish a core group of experts from Member States with a view to developing a framework by December 2012 for conclusion of a draft agreement on Rules of Origin;
7. **CALLS UPON** UNECA, the African Development Bank and other relevant development partners, to support the implementation of the Action Plan and the establishment of the CFTA;
8. **REQUESTS** the Commission to assess the impact on African countries, of the proposal to extend duty free, quota free access to Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Low Income Countries (LICs) before transmitting it to the G20.
9. **ALSO REQUESTS** the Commission to report on regular basis on the implementation of this Decision to the Executive Council through the Permanent Representatives' Committee (PRC).

