

DIRECTORATE OF INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION

Media Advisory

Venue: Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

WHAT: The AfCFTA Ratification Appreciation Awards Ceremony

WHEN: 26th February, 2021

TIME: 15:00 -17:00 Hrs

Where: Register here: - <https://bit.ly/2P945Ft>

Who: The African Union through the Department of Trade and Industry, the Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Secretariat in collaboration with the Ae Trade Group

Background: The African Union Heads of State and Government decided that its member states start trading under the African Continental Free Trade Area Agreement on 1st of January 2021. This was decided during their 13th Extraordinary Summit that was held on the 5th of December 2020. To mark the historic occasion, several activities were organized in the month of January 2021 by various stakeholders including the private sector.

It was in the same spirit that the Ae Trade Group, with several African business associations namely the African Business Council, the Pan African Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Federation of West African Chambers of Commerce and Industry and the East African Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture, co organized an Appreciation Award ceremony for ten heads of States and Government and various Heads of institutions. The private sector further sought to collaborate with the African Union Commission through its Department of Trade and Industry in the organization of the Ceremony. It was in this regards that the ceremony took place on the 15th of January 2021 at the African Union Commission.

During the aforementioned Award Ceremony, the Commission suggested to the private sector to broaden the awards to all Heads of State and Government whose countries have ratified the AfCFTA Agreement. This suggestion was welcomed by the private sector and it is this regard that this Ceremony is being held. Ambassadors and Heads of Mission based here in Addis Ababa will receive the Awards on behalf of their respective Heads of State and Governments. Given that some of the Heads of State and Governments whose countries have ratified the AfCFTA Agreement were already awarded in the event of the 15th January, 2021, only 27 out of the 36 will receive the Appreciation Awards.

The A-eTrade Group is an African Diaspora-led social entrepreneurship initiative that aims to fill crucial gaps in e-commerce and other information and communication technologies. Through its not-for-profit component, the African Electronic Commerce Development International (A-eCDI), it signed, a Memorandum of Understanding with the African Union Commission on 19 October 2018. The overall objective of the memorandum is to foster public-private-partnership in developing and implementing a continental e-commerce platform and associated services as an enabler for digital transformation and boosting intra-African trade in the context of the implementation of the AfCFTA and the African Union's Agenda 2063.

About the AfCFTA The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) is a free trade area, outlined in the African Continental Free Trade Agreement, with trade commencing as of 1 January 2021. AfCFTA is the largest in the world in terms of participating countries since the formation of the World Trade Organization.

The agreement was brokered by the African Union (AU) and was signed in Kigali, Rwanda on March 21, 2018. AU member States have continued to show interest in this continental project. To date, the Agreement has been signed by 54 out of 55-member States.

For more inquiries about the Appreciation Awards Ceremony please contact:

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