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DIVISION OF COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION

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**Seventh Session of the Conference of African Ministers of Trade:
Senior Officials Discuss Intra- African Trade and Related Issues**

Accra 1 December 2011 – Senior Officials representing African Union Member States, meeting in Accra since 29 November 2011 within the framework of the Seventh Ordinary Session of the Conference of African Ministers of Trade ended their deliberations today 1 December 2011 after three days of intense debate on African trade issues as per the agenda of their meeting.

Participants to the Senior Officials meeting are also drawn from high-level Officials of Regional Economic Communities (RECs) , United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, Multilateral Institutions, Inter-governmental Organizations, Civil Society, Non-Governmental Organizations and other development partners.

During the consideration of the draft policy paper the officials deliberated on issues related to intra-African trade performances, traditional trade with partners outside the African continent, the non diversification of African exports with regard to products as well as destination markets, boost Intra-African trade, establishment of Continental Free Trade Area (CFTA), strengthening of supply capacities, improvement of infrastructure, adoption of trade facilitation, enhancement of African products, mobilization of financial resources for commercial activities, consideration of adjustments costs, convertibility of currencies, free movement of persons and liberalization of services.

Considering the draft Action Plan on Boosting Intra African Trade, which was developed in response to the task given by Trade Ministers and Heads of State and Government to fast track the CFTA and boost intra-African Trade, the content of the Plan was discussed with special focus on matrix of priority action clusters; objectives ; specific action points; possible implementation timeframes and the actors for its implementation, namely, Member States, RECs, the AUC and partners. The Senior Officials extensively deliberated, improved and recommended the draft Action Plan for consideration and adoption by Ministers.

The meeting also considered the draft Framework for the Continental Free Trade Area, Road Map, Architecture and Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanism; reviewed the Multilateral trade negotiations; considered the report on the Third Global Review on Aid for Trade, as well as the report on the 10th AGOA Forum. The meeting also considered the report on preparations for UNCTAD XIII including issues pertinent to the Economic Partnership Agreements and issues related on procedures and regulations for informal cross border traders in Africa.

The meeting further considered two draft declarations: draft Accra Declaration on WTO and the Draft declaration on Boosting Intra-African Trade which they recommended for adoption by the Ministerial Conference to be held from 2 to 3 December 2011.

For more information, please visit the African Union Website: www.au.int