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Press Release

The 6th Meeting of the Continental Task Force (CTF) Discusses Fast-tracking of the Establishment of the Continental Free Trade Area (CFTA)



Nairobi, Kenya – 18 September 2016. The 6th Meeting of the Continental Task Force (CTF) on the Continental Free Trade Area (CFTA), commenced today in Nairobi, Kenya. The meeting was organized by the Department of Trade and industry of the African Union Commission in preparation for the 3rd Meeting of the CFTA Negotiating Forum that will take place from 3-7 October 2016. During the next two days, experts from the African Union Commission, the Regional Economic Communities (RECs), the African Development Bank (AfDB), and the United Nations Economic Commission for

Africa (UNECA), will consider Terms of Reference (ToR) for the Technical Working Groups and draft modalities for the CFTA Negotiations in trade in goods and trade in services. In addition, the meeting will take stock of the on-going exercise to develop a draft negotiating text on the CFTA and discuss how to deliver on the Summit Directives on fast-tracking the establishment of the CFTA.

The CTF is established to coordinate actions between the African Union Commission and the Regional Economic Communities and to ensure that the CFTA negotiations are conducted within the agreed timelines.

In his opening remarks, Mr. Prudence Sebahizi, Chief Technical Advisor on the CFTA, on behalf of Mrs. Treasure Maphanga, Director of Trade and Industry of the African Union Commission, expressed his gratitude to the Task Force for the progress made so far with regards to the CFTA negotiations. The Head of the CFTA Unit recalled and highlighted outcomes of the meetings of the CFTA Negotiating Forum as well as the Meeting of the African Union Ministers of Trade. Mr. Sebahizi encouraged the Continental Task Force to work as a team to ensure that the negotiations are effectively concluded by 2017. He finally informed the participants that the African Union Commission is working together with the African Trade Policy Center (ATPC) and the UNECA to organize the African Trade Week (ATW2016) from 26 November to 2 December 2016 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. According to Mr. Sebahizi, the objective of the ATW2016 is to provide a comprehensive, integrated and inclusive platform for policy dialogue between various constituencies, including public officials, parliamentarians, private sector and civil society on Africa's current transformation agenda.

"The African Trade Week 2016 will provide networking opportunity through a Business-to-Business Exchange Programme (B2B Exchange) for the private sector and through an exhibition of productive and trade capacity building programs", he concluded.

The main expected results of the 6th Meeting of the CTF include the finalization of remaining Terms of Reference (ToR) for the Technical Working Groups (Sanitary and Phytosanitary measures, Trade Remedies and Technical Barriers to Trade). The Meeting is also expected to discuss modalities for negotiations of trade in goods and trade in services, as well as, modalities to implement the Summit Decisions on fast-tracking the establishment of the CFTA by the indicative date of 2017.



For further information, please contact **Mr. Prudence Sebahizi – Head of the CFTA Unit** - **Email:** SebahiziP@africa-union.org

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