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NOTE TO EDITORS

UPDATE ON CONTINENTAL FREE TRADE AREA (CFTA) NEGOTIATIONS

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia – 11 October 2017: Chief Negotiators and Experts in trade from AU Member States met on 2-7 October 2017 at the African Union (AU) headquarters, in Addis Ababa, within the framework of the Seventh Meeting of the Continental Free Trade Area Negotiating Forum (CFTA-NF).

The participants made substantial progress, agreeing on the following:

- a) to adhere to the deadline of December 2017 to complete the draft legal text as directed by the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government;
- b) the title and content of the legal text, to be “Agreement Establishing the Continental Free Trade Area”;
- c) the draft Protocol on Trade in Services;
- d) the draft Protocol of Trade in Goods.

The CFTA, is a flagship project of the African Union’s Agenda 2063, and aims to boost Africa’s economic growth and development through integration by creating “One African Market”, which will boost intra-African trade and create a wider market of more than 1.2 billion people with a combined GDP of US Dollars 2.19 trillion. The establishment of the CFTA is the first Agenda 2063 flagship project on target for completion within the roadmap established by the Agenda 2063 First Ten Year Implementation Plan. As decided by the June 2015 Summit in Johannesburg, South Africa, the second phase will comprise of negotiations on Investments, Intellectual Property Rights and Competition Policy.

During the meeting scheduled for 6 November 2017 to 1 December 2017, Chief Negotiators and Experts are expected to prioritize the finalization of the CFTA. The CFTA-NF will consider pending issues in the Agreement Establishing the CFTA during their next

meeting scheduled to take place from 20th – 24th November 2017 following a Dedicated Session on Trade in Goods. Any unresolved issues will be referred to the Committee of Senior Trade Officials and then to the AU Ministers of Trade. The entire legal text will be considered by the African Union Ministers of Trade at the end of November 2017, prior to its consideration by the Specialized Technical Committee (STC) on Justice and Legal Affairs in December 2017. The draft CFTA Agreement will be on one of the Agenda items of the January 2018 Summit to be held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

For more information, please contact

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