

DIRECTORATE OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION

NOTE TO EDITORS

The African Continental Free Trade Area Protocol is a Means towards Building the “Africa We Want”



Kigali Rwanda, 19th March 2018: The establishment of the African Continental Free Trade Area will result in a unified market of over 1,2 billion people with a combined gross product of over US\$3 trillion, said H.E. Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the African Union Commission, in his address during the 18th Executive Council on African Continental Free Trade Area. He added that it would result in an increase in intra-African trade of 52 per cent by 2022 and culminate in substantial improvements of the lives of Africans.

“Everything has been said about the African Continental Free Trade Area, its crucial function in African integration, its economic spillover effect, the solidarity, of which it is the

symbol against other blocs in a world where competition is fierce, its positive impact on the well-being of our peoples, the expected opening up of immense sources of jobs and the encouraging development prospects it offers to our youths,” said H.E. Mahamat.

He also took the opportunity to commend the African Union’s Department of Trade and Industry, for their dedication to the processes that led to the launch of this historic project.

Speaking on behalf of the host country, Ms. Louise Mushikiwabo, Minister of Foreign Affairs cooperation of the republic of Rwanda, urged member states to sign and speed the ratification and implementation AfCFTA to enable us to build the Africa we want.

“This Agreement must enter into force as soon as possible. By signing and ratifying it, we would signal to African people and the world that we are determined to play our part as a global player while promoting the continent’s economic interests as one, through a single market,’ said H.E Mushikiwabo to the delegates gathered at the Kigali Convention Centre.

H.E Mushikiwabo further lauded the African Union Commission, Member states, Chief negotiators and trade technocrats for the hard work they put on establishing the administrative, legal and logistical structures of AfCFTA which will enable the continent to build a prosperous Africa, as set out in Agenda 2063.

Addressing the diplomatic corps, Vera Songwe, Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, first acknowledged the hard work that went into crafting the African Continent Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and echoed the considerable benefits this agreement has for the people of the continent.

“While we mark the important progress made, the road does not end here today, we must develop the national schedules for tariff reduction in trade in goods and for priority services; we must complete the annex on rules of origin, Above all, we must ensure that the agreement is ratified through our respective national processes,’ H.E. Shongwe also called on member states to sign, ratify and implement the AfCFTA to ensure the delivery of jobs and prosperity for African citizens.

The day-long meeting concluded with brief remarks from H.E Louise Mushikiwabo, who further thanked the AU Commission and her peers for the good collaboration and working spirit during the deliberations. The report of the Executive council will be submitted for consideration and adoption to the Assembly on 21st March 2018 at the Kigali Conference center.

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