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DIRECTORATE OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION

### Press Release

#### Sixth African Union Ministers of Trade:

**Commissioner Muchanga reiterates the dire need for all State-Parties to establish national AfCFTA consultative and coordinating mechanisms for regular dialogue**



**Dakar, Senegal – 4 June 2018** - The 6<sup>th</sup> Meeting of African Union Ministers of Trade (AMOT) concluded today in Dakar, Senegal after two days of deliberation. The meeting was preceded by the 11<sup>th</sup> meeting of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Negotiating Forum and the 6<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Committee of Senior Trade Officials (STO).

In delivering his welcome address, H.E. Amb. Albert M. Muchanga, AU Commissioner of Trade and Industry congratulated the members of the new Bureau of the African Union Ministers of Trade (Uganda, Democratic Republic of Congo, Mauritania, South Africa and Cote D'Ivoire) who

will lead the AfCFTA process for the next twelve months. This includes completing the remaining tasks of the Phase 1 negotiations and starting the Phase 2 negotiations centered on investment, competition policy and intellectual property rights and possibly e-commerce.

Commissioner Muchanga added: "...there are emerging risks in the international trading environment as a result of the looming trade war. Fast tracking the coming into force of the legal instruments establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area and its resultant operation can mitigate the adverse impacts of the trade war if it occurs. Africa is innocent in this looming trade war but we can still be its victims. Let us all remember that innocent victims are part of the sad history of humankind."

Since macroeconomic stability is crucial to economic integration, Ambassador Muchanga urged trade ministers to work closely with ministers responsible for finance and development planning in promoting alignment of macroeconomic stability and adherence to the AfCFTA agenda.

Considering the need for platforms for regular dialogue, the Commissioner reiterated the dire need for all State-Parties which do not already have national AfCFTA consultative and coordinating mechanisms to take steps to establish them.

In opening the meeting, H.E Mahammed Boun Abdallah Dionne, Prime Minister of the Republic of Senegal, noted the strong momentum on the AfCFTA. "It is up to Africa to develop Africa", the Prime Minister said, emphasizing the importance for the continent to improve on its share of global GDP and investment flows.

At the end of the two day Ministerial Meeting, the Ministers adopted the recommendations of the STO on the legally-scrubbed annexes to (a) the AfCFTA Protocol on Trade in Goods (b) the Protocol on Rules and Procedures on the Settlement of Disputes (c) agreed on the five priority sectors (transport, communication, financial, tourism and business services) and the approach to be adopted in developing Schedules of Specific Commitments on Trade in Services.

The Ministers called on AUC, ECA and UNCTAD to undertake further analytical work to inform the preparation of Schedules of Tariff Concessions for Trade in Goods and to make them available to member states no later than end June 2018. This is to be followed by the preparation of templates for Schedules of Tariff Concessions for Trade in Goods and Schedules of Specific Commitments on Trade in Services by the end of July 2018. The meeting of the 12<sup>th</sup> AfCFTA-NF tentatively scheduled to be held in September is expected to approve the templates for the operationalization of the AfCFTA. The Schedules of Tariff Concessions for Trade in Goods and Schedules of Specific Commitments on Trade in Services will be submitted to the January 2019 Session of the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government for adoption.

The Ministers were given an audience with H.E. Macky Sall, President of the Republic of Senegal who commended the strong effort to conclude the outstanding technical issues for the operationalization of the AfCFTA. President Sall underscored the importance of the AfCFTA for the transformation of the continent. He disclosed that Senegal's ratification process is underway and is expected to be completed before the end of the year.

In addition to Member States, the meeting was also attended by Regional Economic Communities and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa.

Commenting on the outcome, ATPC Coordinator David Luke noted that the meeting was very productive. This underscores the seriousness with which the African authorities are approaching the operationalization of the AfCFTA.



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