



Press Release N° _____ /2019

Stakeholder Validation Workshop to Harmonize African Fuel Standards



Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 10th December 2019 - The African Union Commission (AUC) in collaboration with the African Refiners and Distributors Association (ARA) hosted a two-day workshop, from 10th to 11th December, 2019 - to validate “The Benefits of Adopting AFRI Fuel Specifications Roadmap” which aims to ensure superior fuel quality and significant emissions reduction for achieving clean air in Africa. Harmonized regional and continental fuel specifications are believed to make a positive and lasting

impact on economies, air quality, health, and climate. The purpose of the workshop was to meet with the stakeholders and discuss a draft of the study on the socio-economic benefits of these harmonized specifications to develop a final report to be presented to the AU for its adoption.

The director of Infrastructure and Energy at the AUC, Mr. Cheikh Bedda, highlighted the importance of a continental approach to develop the right fuel specifications and vehicle standards with an ambitious, yet achievable roadmap. “In the context of regional and continental integration, a common approach is ideal as this enables the continent to move together in the same direction. It is even more critical in the new dispensation of operationalizing the African Continental Free Trade Area.” Harmonized fuel specifications would boost Intra-African trade and is therefore key to sustainable economic development throughout the continent. Intra-African trade is expected to rise as access to larger regional markets increase and shared specifications discourage illegal activity such as smuggling and tampering with product quality, as indicated in the study.

As Africa moves towards cleaner air, the reduction of harmful particles such as particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) emitted from substandard vehicles reduces the concentration of PM_{2.5} in the atmosphere. The study points out PM_{2.5} is one of the factors in causing premature deaths, thereby linking its reduction to an increase in the avoidance of the deaths.

As population grows and urbanization increases, there is an immediate need to develop policies regulating vehicle exhaust emissions and fuel specifications across the continent. However, as emphasized during the workshop, it is important to consider and continue to address issues regarding the cost and viability of African refiners to secure the support of the member states. Furthermore, challenges outlined by stakeholders included vehicular control mechanisms, timeframe for quality

adjustments for refineries, and cost effective methods for production and/or import of fuel with higher specifications. 19 stakeholders were in attendance of this workshop representing the ARA and supporting institutions. Feedback obtained from this fruitful discussion will serve the consultants and the ARA in finalizing the report in support for the application of AFRI specifications once adopted by the AU Policy Organs. A pan African approach with the backing of the AU would be valuable in facilitating a coordinated and structured implementation of this roadmap to achieving clean air. The roadmap for reaching full compliance to AFRI specifications is expected to be presented to the AU in 2020 and its adoption, 2021.

For more information about the workshop and for media inquiries, please contact:

1. **Ms. Sophia Makonnen**| Communications Consultant | Department of Infrastructure and Energy | African Union Commission | E-mail: sophiexmakonnen@gmail.com

2. **Mr. Gamal Ahmed A. Karrar**| Communication Officer| Directorate of Information and Communication, African Union Commission | E-mail: GamalK@africa-union.org

For further information: Directorate of Information and Communication | African Union Commission | E-mail: DIC@africa-union.org | Web Site: www.au.int | Addis Ababa | Ethiopia

Follow us:

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/AfricanUnionCommission>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/AfricanUnion>

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/AUCommission>