

## **CLOSING CEREMONY**

Kigali, 21 March 2018

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**This has been a memorable day for the people of Africa. Allow me once again to commend everyone involved in bringing us to this stage.**

**The private sector is a pillar of a strong and prosperous Africa. I thank business leaders for their active participation in this Summit. This is a very welcome development, which should continue as a lasting partnership.**

**The task now is to ratify the African Continental Free Trade Area and the Protocol on the Free Movement of Persons, so that they may come into force as soon as possible. It is well understood that some Member States require additional time for internal procedures and consultations.**

**The African Union, and all of us, are going to be called upon to deliver as never before. Indeed, the need to efficiently and effectively manage major programmes, such as this, is the reason why we are prioritising the institutional and financial reform of our organisation. I therefore request that we continue to give the reform process the full attention it deserves.**

**Today's milestone is an indication of how much is possible when we work together. Let's use the momentum we have gained to push forward with the other Agenda 2063 flagship projects that we have committed ourselves to in the first Ten-Year Implementation Plan.**

**Finally, in order to fully realise the benefits of continental free trade, I would like to underscore the necessity of ensuring that women and young people have their full and rightful place.**

**Before I close, let me thank once again our CFTA champion, Mahamadou Issoufou who has ably led us through this process.**

**I wish you all a safe journey home, and thank you very much for your kind attention.**