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100 Days to the CFTA ” - Chief Negotiators reconfirm their commitment to conclude negotiations on the CFTA by end of 2017



Addis Ababa, Ethiopia – 02 October 2017. The African Union Commission is organizing the Seventh Meeting of the Continental Free Trade Area (CFTA) Negotiating Forum (CFTA-NF) from 02-07 October 2017 in Ethiopia. The Objective of the meeting is to consider the draft Texts of the CFTA Agreement and its Annexes and Appendices proposed by the Technical Working Groups (TWGs). Furthermore, the Chief Negotiators will discuss criteria for designating sensitive products and exclusion list in the modalities for tariff liberalization.

The larger Vision of the CFTA as defined by the African Union Agenda 2063 is to build an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the global arena.



In his introductory remarks, Amb. Albert M. Muchanga, Commissioner for Trade and Industry of the African Union Commission, congratulated the participants for the progress attained so far and expressed his confidence in the good work that has been undertaken so far by the Negotiating Forum. The Commissioner urged Member States to set minimum targets for this week in order to sustain the momentum to deliver on time and in full. 'Let me as well stress that I am expecting at the end of your deliberations,

that you will assist me reaffirm my current conviction that the negotiations are on track and on schedule "he added. Before he concluded, Amb. Muchanga said 'let me remind you that there are less than hundred days to the deadline. I am, however, very hopeful that you will build on the progress attained so far and deliver to the people of Africa and the Assembly of the African Union Heads of State and Government by December this year, a legal instrument establishing the Continental Free Trade Area, with Annexes.

During an exchange views session that followed, CFTA Chief Negotiators confirmed their commitment to conclude the CFTA Agreement by end of 2017 and outlined the benefits that will accrue from the establishment of the Continental Free Trade Area (CFTA).

The meeting is chaired by Amb. Chiedu Osakwe from Nigeria in his capacity as Chair of the CFTA-NF. Ambassador Osakwe concluded the exchange by underlining that, the conclusion of the CFTA was a strategic economic priority for the Continent for growth, structural transformation, job creation, welfare and prosperity. There was no Plan B and failure was not an option". He commended AU Commissioner Muchanga for his leadership and the commitment of the AUC Team. He also praised the Chief Negotiators for their reaffirmation of the goals of the CFTA Negotiations.

The meeting is attended by Members of the CFTA Negotiating Forum, Trade Experts from the eight RECs (CEN-SAD, COMESA, EAC, ECCAS, ECOWAS, IGAD, SADC and UMA), members of the CFTA Continental Task Force (CTF), AFDB, UNECA and UNCTAD.

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