

AFRICAN UNION

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ASSEMBLY OF THE UNION

Twenty-Fifth Ordinary Session

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Assembly/AU/Dec.569-587(XXV)

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Assembly/AU/Res.1(XXV)



**DECISIONS, DECLARATIONS
AND RESOLUTION**

**DECISION ON THE LAUNCH OF CONTINENTAL
FREE TRADE AREA NEGOTIATIONS
Doc. Assembly/AU/11(XXV)**

The Assembly,

1. **TAKES NOTE** of the outcomes of the Conference and **ADOPTS** the following:
 - i) The objectives and principles of Negotiating the CFTA;
 - ii) The indicative Roadmap for the Negotiation and establishment of the CFTA;
 - iii) The Terms of Reference for the CFTA Negotiating Forum (CFTA-NF);
 - iv) The institutional arrangements for the CFTA negotiations;
 - v) The Declaration on the Launch of the negotiations for the establishment of the CFTA.
2. **EXPRESSES** satisfaction with the preparatory work done towards the launch of the negotiations for the Continental Free Trade Area and **COMMITTS** to negotiate a CFTA with significant benefits by building on the progress already achieved by the RECs;
3. **LAUNCHES** negotiations for the establishment of the Continental Free Trade Area aimed at integrating Africa's markets in line with the objectives and principles enunciated in the Abuja Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community;
4. **REQUESTS** the Continental Free Trade Area-Negotiating Forum (CFTA-NF) to organise its inaugural Meeting in 2015 and to work towards concluding the negotiations by 2017;
5. **CALLS UPON** the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa and the African Development Bank, African Export-Import Bank (Afreximbank) and Development Partners to provide the necessary support to the Member States, the Commission and the Regional Economic Communities to ensure a timely conclusion of the Negotiations.
6. **TAKES NOTE WITH APPRECIATION** of the status of preparations for the 10th WTO Ministerial Conference 2015, and **CONGRATULATES** the Republic of Kenya for hosting this important Conference, and **URGES** Member States to participate actively;
7. **WELCOMES:**
 - i) The briefing on progress made on AGOA as well as the initiative to hold in Gabon a Ministerial Meeting in preparation for the AGOA Forum;

ii) The briefing on UNCTAD XIV due to be held in Lima, Peru in March 2016. In this regard, **CONGRATULATES** H.E. Ms. Amina Mohamed, Cabinet Secretary for Foreign Affairs and International Trade of the Republic of Kenya over her appointment by the WTO General Council as Chair of the 10th Ministerial Conference.

8. **CONGRATULATES** the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the East African Community (EAC) for the launching of the Tripartite Free Trade Area (TFTA) in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt, in June 2015 which is a great achievement towards continental integration to be emulated by other regions.



**DECLARATION ON THE LAUNCH OF THE NEGOTIATIONS FOR
THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CONTINENTAL FREE TRADE AREA (CFTA)
Doc. Assembly/AU/11(XXV)**

We, the Heads of State and Government of the African Union, meeting at the 26th Ordinary Session of our Assembly in Johannesburg, South Africa, from 14 to 15 June 2015;

Recalling our Assembly Decision (Assembly/AU/Dec.394 (XVIII)) adopted in January 2012 Summit on the establishment of the Continental Free Trade Area to be operationalized by an indicative date of 2017;

Also Recalling our Assembly Decision (Assembly/AU/11(XXIV)) of January 2015 reaffirming our commitment to launch the CFTA Negotiations in June 2015.

Reaffirming our commitment to increase intra-African trade through the establishment of a CFTA that will foster economic growth, equitable development, and support integration through trade liberalization, industrialization and infrastructure development towards the full implementation of the Abuja Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community;

Emphasizing the importance of building the CFTA on existing regional free trade areas in order to broaden and deepen continental integration;

Reiterating that the establishment of a functional CFTA that integrates African economies is a fundamental milestone in the implementation of Agenda 2063 and the Common African Position on the Post-2015 Development Agenda will play a major role in fostering the structural transformation of the Continent;

Reiterating the importance of implementing the Action Plan on Boosting Intra African Trade (BIAT) prioritising work on industrialisation, infrastructure development and free movement of people to ensure maximisation of benefits of establishing the CFTA;

Noting the importance of relevant flanking policies and reforms at the continental, regional and national levels to maximise the benefits of establishing the continental free trade area;

Recognizing the need for technical assistance in order to facilitate the effective participation of all Member States in the entire process leading to the establishment of the CFTA;

Aware of the importance of constructive participation of the private sector, parliamentarians and other relevant stakeholders in the CFTA Negotiations through appropriate mechanisms;

Taking Note of the Report the AU Ministers of Trade Meeting that was held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on 14-15 May 2015;

Now therefore,

1. **LAUNCH** negotiations for the establishment of the Continental Free Trade Area aimed at integrating Africa's markets in line with the objectives and principles enunciated in the Abuja Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community;
2. **URGE** all Regional Economic Communities and Member States to participate effectively in the CFTA negotiations;
3. **CALL UPON** the Commission, United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, African Development Bank, African Export-Import Bank (Afreximbank) and other development partners to provide analytical support, technical assistance and to carry out a comprehensive capacity building program targeted at Member States and RECS in order to strengthen their capacity to effectively engage in the negotiations;
4. **COMMEND** the Commission and the Continental Task Force on the CFTA for the work done in preparation for the launch of the CFTA negotiations.



