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**EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**  
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**Addis Ababa, ETHIOPIA**

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**REPORT OF THE 7<sup>TH</sup> MEETING OF AFRICAN MINISTERS OF TRADE**  
**12-13 DECEMBER 2018, CAIRO, EGYPT**



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**SEVENTH MEETING OF  
AFRICAN UNION MINISTERS OF TRADE  
12 - 13 December 2018  
Cairo, ARAB REPUBLIC OF EGYPT**

**TI/AfCFTA/AMOT/7/FINAL/REPORT  
Original: English**

**REPORT OF THE SEVENTH MEETING OF  
AFRICAN UNION MINISTERS OF TRADE**

## INTRODUCTION

1. The Seventh Meeting of the African Union Ministers of Trade (AMOT) was held from 12 to 13 December 2018, at the Al Manara International Convention Centre, Cairo, Egypt. The purpose of the Meeting was to finalise the Modalities for Tariff Liberalisation and the draft Negotiating Guidelines for Schedules of Specific Commitments and Regulatory Frameworks for Trade in Services.

## ATTENDANCE

2. The Meeting was attended by Ministers responsible for Trade and delegates from Algeria, Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Democratic Republic of Congo, Republic of the Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Egypt, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Sudan, United Republic of Tanzania, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

3. The Meeting was also attended by officials from the African Union Commission (AUC), Arab Maghreb Union (UMA), the East African Community (EAC), the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Intergovernmental Authority for Development (IGAD), the Southern African Development Community (SADC), and observers from the African Development Bank (AfDB), United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA). The List of Participants is appended as **Annex I**.

## OPENING OF THE MEETING (*Agenda Item 1*)

### **Remarks by Her Excellency, Ms Chileshe Kapwepwe, the Secretary General of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA)**

4. In her remarks, the Secretary General of COMESA, Ms Chileshe Kapwepwe, who was also addressing the Meeting on behalf of the RECs, commended the political leadership of the continent for the leadership and guidance which they have provided on the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) agenda. She observed that this was evident from the significant progress so far made in advancing the AfCFTA. She highlighted the expeditious manner in which the negotiations were conducted, followed by the encouraging responses in the signing of the Agreement together with the number of ratifications undertaken by the Member States since the 10<sup>th</sup> Extraordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government, which was held in Kigali, Rwanda in March 2018. She encouraged those countries who have not yet signed to do so in order to see the implementation of the Agreement and also in order for the Continent to realize the benefits of the AfCFTA.

5. The Secretary General advised that in fast tracking the AfCFTA, there were also lessons and synergies to be derived from the experiences of the RECs and the developments in the Tripartite Free Trade Area.

6. Ms Kapwepwe also advised the need to engage with stakeholders and conduct capacity building activities. Such activities will assist the stakeholders and prepare them in implementing the various programmes under the AfCFTA. The speech is attached as **Annex II**.

#### **Remarks by Her Excellency, Dr Vera Songwe, the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA)**

7. Mr David Luke delivered remarks on behalf of Dr Vera Songwe, the Executive Secretary of UNECA. The statement noted the tremendous progress made towards the signing and ratification of the Agreement establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). Such critical advancements demonstrate the commitment of Member States to the African agenda on integration and that this sent positive signals to the rest of the world regarding the ambitions of Africa in developing itself.

8. The Executive Secretary's statement pointed out that much remains to be done before the AfCFTA can actually be implemented. She mentioned that ECA has developed various studies in order to assist the Member States of the African Union in making informed decisions and in facilitating progress towards realization of the objectives of the AfCFTA.

9. Dr Songwe concluded by pointing out that Africa stood to derive a lot of benefits from the AfCFTA. She advised that the role of the private sector to harness trade for Africa's development must not be overlooked since it is the private sector that trades, innovates and generates most jobs. She exhorted Member State to have in place an AfCFTA national implementation committee which includes the private sector. The speech is attached as **Annex III**

#### **Remarks by His Excellency, Dr Mukhisa Kituyi, Secretary General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)**

10. Ms Pamela Hamilton delivered remarks on behalf of Dr. Mukhisa Kituyi, Secretary General of UNCTAD. She started by pointing out that UNCTAD has walked with African countries in realizing the dream of a common market and economic community of Africa from the 1980 Lagos Plan of Action, to the 1991 Abuja Treaty on the African Economic Community, and to the 2018 Kigali Framework Agreement on the African Continental Free Trade Area. In addition, she gave example of UNCTAD's work in Africa's including the work on developing a mechanism for the identification, reporting, resolution, monitoring and elimination of non-tariff barriers (NTBs). This is one of the key implementing mechanisms that is called for in the framework instrument on NTBs.

11. The statement pointed out that UNCTAD was convinced about the benefits of a single African market. The studies conducted by UNCTAD have also affirmed that the potential benefits of an open, stable and single continental market were going to be significant with minimal costs. The speech is attached as **Annex IV**.

**Remarks by Dr Benedict Okey Oramah, President and Chairman of the Board of Directors, African Export-Import Bank (AFREXIMBANK)**

12. Dr Oramah shared that it was the desire of Afreximbank to work closely with the African Union in order to contribute to continental integration efforts through support to the AfCFTA. Noting that there would inevitably be some challenges as the AfCFTA process moves forward, he informed the Meeting that the Bank was making a proposal to the African Union to introduce an adjustment facility targeted at vulnerable countries that may suffer short to medium term fiscal revenue losses upon adoption of the AfCFTA.

13. Dr Oramah shared the bank's vision in contributing towards the development of the continent and in advancing the AfCFTA. Amongst the initiatives being undertaken were: provision of funds to cover trade finance as well as investment finance and guarantees; establishment of confirmation lines to African banks in order to facilitate intra-regional trade and imports of essential goods; creation of a digital ecosystem that will eliminate major bottlenecks to trade and financial flows within the Continent; and a contribution towards the elimination of nontariff barriers. The Meeting was also informed that Afreximbank was working closely with the AU Commission and other key stakeholders on a continental initiative to enhance the participation of the African private sector in trade policy negotiations and formulation to mainstream their views into policy-making. The speech is attached as **Annex V**.

**Remarks by His Excellency Ambassador Albert M. Muchanga, Commissioner for Trade and Industry**

14. The Commissioner for Trade and Industry, Ambassador Albert Muchanga, welcomed the African Ministers of Trade to Cairo. He reminded them of their responsibility to provide political oversight to the ongoing AfCFTA negotiations, highlighting that their presence demonstrated the strong commitment to the process. He thanked the Government and people of Egypt for their warm hospitality and the excellent facilities put at the disposal of Ministers for the Meeting. He invited the Ministers and their delegations to visit the Inter-African Trade Fair taking place in the same venue.

15. The Commissioner updated the Meeting on the status of ratifications of the Agreement establishing the AfCFTA, highlighting that nine AU Member States had deposited their instruments of ratification with the AU Commission. He urged the Ministers whose countries had not already done so, to work with their national stakeholders to sign and ratify the Agreement to enable it to come into force as soon as possible.

16. He outlined the issues which the Meeting was going to consider and reminded Ministers of the Nouakchott decision, which urged Member States to refrain from entering into third party agreements on trade, especially before the entry into force of the Agreement. He further updated the meeting on the developments in the institutional reform of the AUC, noting that the reforms would be effective from 2021. The speech is attached as **Annex VI**.

**The Minister Trade, Industry and Cooperatives of Uganda, Honourable Amelia Kyambadde (MP), Chairperson of AMOT**

17. The Honourable Amelia Kyambadde (MP), the Chairperson of AMOT, started by thanking the Government and People of Egypt for their hospitality to the Ministers at this 7<sup>th</sup> AMOT Meeting. She thanked the Ministers for their confidence in Uganda as the chair of AMOT, noting their zeal and enthusiasm in their commitment to AMOT meetings and the technical teams for their support to the fulfilment of the mandate of AMOT.

18. The Chairperson of AMOT highlighted nine different issues in her remarks and these were: a) the steady pace of ratifications of the AfCFTA Agreement, urging others to follow suit; b) she urged Member States to promote and support intra-African trade; c) the importance of African countries to invest in internet connectivity and other infrastructural issues; d) the impact of NTBs on intra-African trade; e) affordable and accessible credit, urging African governments to put in place innovative smart solutions to fund business startups, especially for women and youth entrepreneurs; f) the need for African credit institutions to tailor make their products in order to meet the requirements of African businesses; g) the vast natural resources which Africa has and that need to be tapped into; h) the huge potential Africa has in agro-business, noting Africa's vast arable land, fresh water and energy sources; and i) that with all Africa's endowments, the AfCFTA is crucial as a catalyst to harness them for development.

19. The Chairperson urged the Ministers to enforce the AfCFTA with a phased and specified timeframe noting that a united Africa is powerful, attractive to investment and a solid negotiating force. The speech is attached as **Annex VII**.

**Welcoming Remarks by His Excellency Amr Nassar, Minister of Trade and Industry, Arab Republic of Egypt**

20. The Meeting was officially opened by His Excellency Eng. Amr Nassar, Minister for Industry and Trade of the Arab Republic of Egypt, who welcomed the African Union Ministers of Trade and all participants to Cairo and wished them a pleasant stay in Egypt.

21. He reminded participants that the AfCFTA Agreement is known to liberalize barriers that are detrimental to free trade. He reiterated the instrumental value of trade expansion between countries, where the most important tasks lie in the development of infrastructure.

22. He highlighted the fact that fostering intra-African trade requires trade facilitation infrastructure including transport, technology, financial services as well as more investment in human development, research and technology

23. His Excellency Eng. Amr Nassar reaffirmed that Egypt would mobilize all its human and financial resources in order to achieve the African continent's prosperity. In concluding his welcoming remarks, His Excellency Eng. Amr Nassar, expressed the hope that the Meeting would help steer the AfCFTA process towards

further tangible progress, and wished the Ministers of Trade and all participants the utmost success in their deliberations. The speech is attached as **Annex VIII**.

### **CONSTITUTION OF THE BUREAU (*Agenda Item 2*)**

24. In terms of the Rules of Procedure, the Bureau was confirmed as follows:

Chairperson :	Uganda (Eastern Africa)
1 <sup>st</sup> Vice-Chairperson:	Democratic Republic of Congo (Central Africa)
2 <sup>nd</sup> Vice-Chairperson:	Mauritania (Northern Africa)
3 <sup>rd</sup> Vice-Chairperson:	South Africa (Southern Africa)
Rapporteur:	Cote d'Ivoire (Western Africa)

25. The Meeting was chaired by Honourable Amelia Kyambadde (MP), Minister of Trade, Industry and Cooperatives from Uganda, while Honourable Souleymane Diarrassouba (MP), Minister of Trade, Industry and the Promotion of SMEs from Côte d'Ivoire was the Rapporteur.

### **ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA (*Agenda Item 3*)**

26. The Ministers considered and adopted their Agenda as follows:

Agenda Item 1:	Opening of the Meeting
Agenda Item 2:	Constitution of the Bureau
Agenda Item 3:	Adoption of the Agenda and Organization of Work
Agenda Item 4:	Consideration of the Report of the 7 <sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Committee of Senior Trade Officials
Agenda Item 5:	Any Other Business
Agenda Item 6:	Date and Venue of the Next Meeting
Agenda Item 7:	Adoption of the Report of the Meeting
Agenda Item 8:	Closing of the Meeting

### **CONSIDERATION OF THE REPORT OF THE 7<sup>th</sup> MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE OF SENIOR TRADE OFFICIALS (*Agenda Item 4*)**

27. The Report of the 7<sup>th</sup> Meeting of Committee of Senior Trade Officials was presented to AMOT for its consideration. Mr Silver Ojakol of Uganda who chaired the Meeting together with Mr Waoti Seydou Toure, who was the rapporteur of the STO, made the presentation. AMOT considered the report of the STOs and made the following conclusions:

#### **a) National Consultations with Stakeholders**

28. AMOT noted that whereas there has been progress in sensitizing stakeholders and conducting consultations on the AfCFTA, some Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and Member States had not yet concluded their internal consultations. AMOT considered that the engagement with stakeholders was important.

29. AMOT agreed on the importance of stakeholder engagement and urged those Member States that had not concluded their consultations with stakeholders, to do so in order to promote ownership and awareness of the AfCFTA. The consultations should however not jeopardise the progress of the AfCFTA processes.

**b) Tariff Liberalizations Template**

30. The Meeting noted that the STOs agreed on the Template, which would be used in the AfCFTA for tariff liberalisation on trade in goods and adopted it as attached in **Annex IX** to this report.

**c) Analysis of Trade Flows**

31. AMOT was briefed on the ongoing work in some Member States on their analytical and diagnostic assessments of trade flows for inclusion in their AfCFTA National Implementation Strategies. AMOT took note of the progress and urged Member States to continue this work with a view to concluding this analysis expeditiously in order to facilitate progress of the AfCFTA.

**d) Roadmap for Finalization of Outstanding Work on AfCFTA Negotiations**

32. AMOT considered the Roadmap for Finalisation of Outstanding Work on the AfCFTA Negotiations. The Roadmap contains outstanding work on Phase 1 in particular on Trade Remedies, Trade in Services and Phase 2 Issues.

**e) Asymmetry in Application of the Modalities on Tariff Liberalisation by LDCs and Developing Countries in Customs Unions**

33. AMOT took note of the deliberations of the STOs on the matter of asymmetry in tariff liberalisation by LDCs and developing countries in customs unions. AMOT noted that there were divergent views on this matter and directed the STOs to authorise the NF to find a practical solution that does not impact on the adopted Modalities.

**f) Designation of Sensitive Products and Exclusion Lists, Anti-Concentration Clause and Double Qualification**

34. AMOT took note of the deliberations of the STO on this matter and agreed as follows:

- a) A 5 year transitional period for liberalisation of sensitive products. State Parties and/or customs unions, may commence liberalisation of the sensitive products in year 6. However, State Parties and/or customs unions who are willing to do so may commence liberalisation of sensitive products earlier;
- b) The timeframe for the liberalisation of sensitive products will remain the same as provided for in the adopted Modalities. For developing countries termination of liberalisation of sensitive products shall be within the 10 year time frame, and for LDCs it shall be 13 years;
- c) The designation for sensitive products is 7% and exclusion list is 3%.

- d) An import value limitation of 10% of the imports from State Parties.<sup>1</sup>

35. The Minister of Niger briefed AMOT of the progress made by the AfCFTA Leader in resolving the reservations made by the 7 seven countries on the modalities for tariff liberalisation. The meeting was informed that Djibouti withdrew its reservation while Zambia, Zimbabwe and Ethiopia agreed to 90% level of ambition with an implementation period of 15 years. Consultations are still ongoing with the Champion for the remaining countries (Malawi, Madagascar and Sudan).

36. After some clarifications, the Meeting concluded that the matter was before the Assembly of Heads of State and Government. It was concluded that in order to resolve the matter at the next Summit in February 2019, it was imperative that all Governments of the six countries be in attendance.

#### **g) AfCFTA Adjustment Facility**

37. AMOT was informed that a study on the Adjustment Facility had been carried out, based on requests from Member States, and that the findings of the study would be disseminated in a dedicated session of the NF. AMOT took note of this update and directed the AUC to organise a dedicated session of the NF to discuss this by April 2019.

#### **h) Guidelines for Development of Schedules of Specific commitments and Regulatory Cooperation Framework for Trade in Services**

38. AMOT considered and approved the Guidelines for Development of Schedules of Specific Commitments and Regulatory Cooperation Framework as attached in **Annex X**.

39. Ethiopia expressed its concerns that requiring Members States to have a 'minimum threshold' for the starting point for negotiations of trade in services is unnecessary, stating that it should be offers and draft schedules of specific commitments that will form the basis of negotiations. Senegal requested for national consultations before committing to a minimum threshold, while Gabon, on behalf of ECCAS suggested that a minimum of 50% commitment needs to be taken in each sub-sector. In addition, AMOT took note of the submissions made by Cameroon, the EAC, Ethiopia and Egypt on the figure of the minimum threshold. Ethiopia also raised concerns about the need for a minimum threshold.

#### **i) Rules of Origin**

40. AMOT took note of the progress towards the development of Appendix IV to the Annex 2 on Rules of Origin and directed the STOs to finalize outstanding work on rules of origin by end of June 2019.

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<sup>1</sup> Ethiopia and Zambia did not join this consensus and noted the ongoing consultations among the G7.

**j) Trade Remedies**

41. AMOT was informed of some inconsistencies in Annex 9 on Trade Remedies and the need to align these with the Draft Guidelines. AMOT took note of the recommendation of STO on this matter and agreed that the TWG on Trade Remedies considers the inconsistencies and report back to the next session of the NF.

**k) Development of Regulations benefiting Special Economic Zones**

42. AMOT noted that the AUC was in the process of developing a technical note which would inform the drafting of the Regulations on Special Economic Zones (SEZ). Amongst others, the technical note would examine the contributions of the SEZ to industrialization, exports and economic development in Africa. AMOT directed the AUC to present the technical note on this matter to the NF at its next meeting.

**l) Roadmap for Finalization of Outstanding Work on AfCFTA Negotiations**

43. AMOT considered the Roadmap for Finalization of Outstanding Work on the AfCFTA Negotiations and adopted it as attached in **Annex XI**.

44. AMOT agreed that:

- a) Negotiations on Trade in Services be concluded by January 2020;
- b) Training on trade in services be provided in parallel with submissions of offers as well as national and regional consultations.

45. AMOT directed the AUC to include in the Roadmap:

- a) a calendar for progressive liberalisation of the other sectors beyond and after the five priority services sectors including the development of regulatory cooperation framework; and
- b) a meeting of the TWG on Trade Remedies and schedule it for March 2019.

46. With regard to Phase II issues, AMOT agreed to establish three separate technical working groups for Investment, Competition Policy and Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs) and requested the AfCFTA NF to complete negotiations by June 2020.

47. AMOT further directed the AUC to:

- a) develop draft terms of reference for each TWG for consideration by the AfCFTA NF by April 2019;
- b) carry out the Situation Analysis studies on Phase 2 issues by April 2019; and
- c) provide the requisite logistical and administrative support to Phase II Negotiations.

**m) Consideration of WTO and other International Trade Issues**

48. AMOT noted an update on the developments at the WTO from the Coordinator of the African Group of the WTO, Ambassador Xavier Carim. He advised the Meeting

that during 2018, the African Group managed to coordinate its interventions across the WTO Agenda and delivered interventions in all negotiating areas, notably at the WTO Trade Negotiating Committee and General Council. He however advised that the Group would benefit from Ministerial guidance as there were issues where it needed to build common positions. The update also highlighted pertinent challenges confronting the WTO, particularly on the non-filling of the vacancies in the Appellate Body, and the unilateral tariff increases which were being made by certain Members. It also provided information on ongoing reforms within the WTO.

49. The Report underscored the need for African countries to unite and strengthen efforts to establish the AfCFTA, in order to boost intra-African trade and develop the Continent. There was also a need for a coherent approach between the priorities of the AfCFTA and the agenda of the African Group's negotiating agenda in the WTO.

50. AMOT took note of the report by the AU Member States' Missions in Geneva and commended the work of the AU Member States' Representatives at the WTO in Geneva coordinated by Ambassador Xavier Carim. AMOT also adopted the Declaration on the WTO Issues in **Annex XII**.

#### **n) Briefing on African Trade Observatory**

51. AMOT received a briefing on the African Trade Observatory (ATO), whose major objective is to provide access to credible information on trade flows among African economies.

52. AMOT endorsed the project and directed the AUC to conduct an analysis of existing trade information sources in Member States and determine how to connect them to the ATO.

#### **o) Africa and Digital ID**

53. AMOT noted the work being done by UNECA, in collaboration with the AUC, on Digital Identification (ID) for Africa. The digital ID provides opportunities for Africa to achieve several Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Aspirations of the African Union's Agenda 2063, whilst also unlocking the benefits of the AfCFTA. In this regard, digital ID platforms would also be useful in supporting other continental platforms such as national ID systems, verification of vendor authenticity, the control of payments data, vital statistics, and promotion of agricultural transformation, as well as creating opportunities for e-commerce and rural development.

54. AMOT took note of the development and appreciated the need to ensure that it is supported by appropriate policy and regulatory responses at national and regional levels.

#### **ANY OTHER BUSINESS (Agenda Item 5)**

55. The Meeting noted that in his welcoming remarks the Commissioner for Trade and Industry had raised an issue regarding African countries entering into trade agreements with third parties and the need for further clarity on this. The Commissioner explained to the meeting the decision on the AfCFTA which was taken

by the 31<sup>st</sup> Session of the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government, held in Nouakchott, Mauritania in July 2018. The decision urged Member States to abstain from entering into bilateral trading arrangements until after the entry into force of the Agreement establishing the AfCFTA.

56. The Commissioner Trade and Industry informed the meeting the AMOT That the AfCFTA is being complemented with the Single African Air Transport Market, the Protocol to the Treaty establishing the African Economic Community relating to free movement of persons, right of residence and right of establishment in addition to the Phase 2 Protocols on Investment, Competition and Intellectual Property Rights earlier referred to. This makes the African Continental Free Trade Area encompass elements of an internal market. He mentioned that the AUC will develop a Concept Note before end of the year that would serve as a basis for deliberation on the theme by the July 2019 Summit.

#### **DATE AND VENUE OF THE NEXT MEETING OF THE AU MINISTERS OF TRADE (AMOT) (Agenda Item 6)**

57. The next Meeting of AU Ministers of Trade will be held a date and venue to be advised by the AUC.

#### **ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE MEETING (Agenda Item 7)**

58. The Meeting considered and adopted its Report.

#### **CLOSING OF THE MEETING (Agenda Item 8)**

59. The Chairperson thanked the Ministers for their fruitful contributions during the Meeting and wished them a safe journey back home.

Signed on this 13<sup>th</sup> day of December 2018 by the Chairperson and Rapporteur as follows:

<p>Hon Minister Amelia KYAMBADDE Minister of Trade, Industry and Cooperatives of Uganda <b>CHAIRPERSON</b></p>	<p>Hon. Souleymane DIARRASSOUBA Minister of Trade, Industry and the Promotion of SMEs of Côte d'Ivoire <b>RAPPORTEUR</b></p>
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This Declaration was adopted by Ambassadors on 4 December 2018

**FINAL DECLARATION ON WTO ISSUES**  
**7<sup>TH</sup> MEETING OF THE AFRICAN MINISTERS OF TRADE**  
**CAIRO, EGYPT, 12-13 DECEMBER 2018**

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**We, Ministers of Trade of the Member States of the African Union**, meeting in Cairo, on 12 and 13 December 2018, at the occasion of the 7<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the African Ministers of Trade (AMOT) in order to, amongst other things, review the state of play in the WTO negotiations, following the outcome of the Eleventh WTO Ministerial Conference;

**Took note** of the recent developments at the WTO since our last meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> September 2017, including the rise in trade protectionist measures that have been challenged as being in breach of WTO rules and principles, the Appellate Body impasse, and new negotiating proposals by a few Members that include calls to change the rules and procedures in the WTO;

**Took note** of the informal processes amongst groups of Members in the Joint Statement Initiatives on electronic commerce, investment facilitation, domestic regulation, and micro, medium and small enterprises and acknowledged that some African Group Members participate in these informal processes.

**Concerned** with the multiple difficulties and challenges faced by African countries who are in the process of acceding to the WTO;

**Acknowledged and welcomed** developments to achieve the objectives of the African Union's Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, through a rules-based governance system established by the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA);

**Reconfirmed** our pledge to work on supporting efforts in the Multilateral Trading System that promote and defend Africa's interests in line with the African Union's "Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want", and recognised the need to build coherence by ensuring that the African Group's negotiating objectives at the WTO fully support the AfCFTA objectives for continental industrialisation, structural transformation and integration;

**Welcomed** the growing recognition of the importance of industrial policy for development;

**Agreed to:**

1. **Reiterate** our concern with the lack of progress on issues of longstanding importance to Africa;
2. **Reaffirm** positions adopted in the AMOT Ministerial Declaration of 30<sup>th</sup> November 2016, notably African Trade Ministers' commitment to meaningful outcomes on trade distorting domestic support, cotton, public stockholding for food security

This Declaration was adopted by Ambassadors on 4 December 2018

purposes, the special safeguard mechanism, and Special and Differential Treatment; and recognising the challenges faced by NFIDCs and emphasising that any outcome in agriculture negotiations shall accord flexibilities to address NFIDCs and LDCs particular situation;

3. **Recall and reaffirm** the importance of implementing WTO Ministerial, and General Council Decisions and Declarations adopted since Doha in 2001, that keep development at the centre of the work program;
4. **Reaffirm the importance** of the negotiations on fisheries subsidies and the need for Special and Differential Treatment for African countries to guarantee policy space necessary to strengthen their fishing industries and capacities for economic and social development;
5. **Reiterate** our concerns that the Aid for Trade initiative should contribute to meeting the objectives of trade-related capacity-building, overcoming supply-side constraints, infrastructure development, or facilitating the integration of developing economies, in particular LDCs in regional and global trade in ways that support their development. We call upon Members to strengthen and improve the Aid for Trade initiative so that it delivers real benefit to recipient developing countries and LDCs, and to avoid conditioning its implementation to the participation on negotiating new issues in the WTO;
6. **Commit** to strengthen in close coordination with Ministries responsible for Trade on our common positions and stay abreast of all developments at the WTO, and ensure that development remains an integral component of all negotiating outcomes for all African economies in line with the Doha Development mandate;
7. **Reiterate** our commitment in pursuing outcomes on Special and Differential Treatment in line with Paragraph 44 of the Doha Ministerial Declaration;
8. **Reaffirm** that Special and Differential Treatment shall be an integral part of all WTO agreements and future multilateral outcomes and shall be embodied, as appropriate, in schedules of concessions and commitments and in the rules and disciplines, so as to be operationally effective and to enable developing countries, in particular LDCs in Africa, to effectively address their development needs in line with Africa's industrial development priorities as encapsulated in the African Union's Agenda 2063 on structural transformation and industrialisation;
9. **Invite** all WTO Members to extend to African graduating countries the existing Special and Differential Treatment measures and exemptions available to LDCs for a period appropriate to the development situation of those countries;

This Declaration was adopted by Ambassadors on 4 December 2018

10. **Pledge** support to African countries in the process of WTO accession and urge Members to desist from making unreasonable requests on African acceding countries to extend any commitments made as a result of their membership to the AfCFTA or that are inconsistent with their levels of development;
  11. **Underscore** that Africa's priority trade policy objective is the AfCFTA that will build a Single African Market for Trade in Goods and Services, and to ensure that WTO outcomes do not undermine those objectives;
  12. **Re-commit** to a rules-based Multilateral Trading System that is fair, equitable, inclusive and development-oriented, and that prioritises Africa's interests;
  13. **Reaffirm** the importance of preserving and adhering to the principles and procedures of the WTO as established in the Marrakech Agreement. This includes: the architecture for Development and Special and Differential Treatment, for developing countries and least developed countries; the procedures and principles governing plurilateral agreements; a multilateral mandate is the necessary prerequisite to advance any negotiating proposal at the WTO; and the WTO Secretariat preserves its international stature and always remains above the partisan position of Members;
  14. **Oppose** unilateral trade measures and call on WTO Members to refrain from any and all measures that undermine WTO principles and the rules based multilateral trading system;
  15. **Urge** that priority attention is given to resolving the Appellate Body impasse and commit to work with all WTO Members to find mutually agreeable solutions, while preserving the essential features and integrity of the system;
  16. **Insist** that any discussions on the future of the WTO shall include the views and interests of the African Group and address the core issues of development and inclusiveness;
  17. **Instruct** officials to work towards a common position on WTO reform.
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# Report of the 7th Meeting of African Ministers of Trade 12-13 December 2018, Cairo, Egypt

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