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**PRESS RELEASE ON NIGER'S DEPOSIT OF ITS INSTRUMENT OF
RATIFICATION OF THE AGREEMENT ON THE AFRICAN CONTINENTAL FREE
TRADE AREA**

Addis Ababa, 9 June 2018: The Chairperson of the African Union (AU) Commission, Moussa Faki Mahamat, yesterday received from the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Niger to the AU the instrument of ratification of the Agreement on the African Continental Free Trade Area from Niger. In addition, the Permanent Representative indicated that the process of ratification of the Protocol on Free Movement of Persons, Right of Residence and Right of Establishment was underway. Niger is also party to the Single African Air Transport Market, which was launched during the January 2018 AU Ordinary Summit.

The Chairperson of the Commission took the opportunity of the deposit of the instrument of ratification to congratulate the Government of Niger on this new key achievement. He reiterated his appreciation to President Mahamadou Issoufou, who is the Champion for the Free Trade Area, for his resolute commitment to African integration.

The Chairperson of the Commission urges all member states that have not yet done so to make the necessary arrangements to become parties to the Free Trade Area Agreement. He also urges all the Member States concerned to sign and ratify, as soon as possible, the Protocol on Free Movement of Persons, Right of Residence and Right of Establishment, and to join the Single African Air Transport Market. Both the Protocol and the Single Market are essential and complementary tools for achieving the integration and unity the African people are yearning for.

It should be recalled that, in addition to Niger, Kenya, Ghana and Rwanda have already deposited their instruments of ratification of the Free Trade Area Agreement. Rwanda has also deposited its instrument of ratification of the Protocol on Free Movement of Persons, Right of Residence and Right of Establishment.

At the AU Extraordinary Summit held in Kigali, on 21 March 2018, forty-four (44) Member States signed the Free Trade Area Agreement and thirty-one (31) the Protocol on Free Movement of Persons, Right of Residence and Right of Establishment. These two instruments will enter into force thirty days after the deposit of the 22nd and 15th instruments of ratification, respectively. 26 AU Member States are party to the Single African Air Transport Market.

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