

PRESS STATEMENT

THE CURRENT AFRICAN CONTINENTAL FREE TRADE AREA NEGOTIATIONS, KIGALI RWANDA

During the 18th Ordinary Session of Assembly of the African Union (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 23-30 January 2012), the Summit adopted a “Decision on boosting intra-African trade and fast tracking the Continental Free Trade Area”.

The Summit directed the African Union Commission to establish the African Continental Free Trade Area by an indicative date of 2017. The aim of this is to boost intra-African trade that currently stands at about 14% of her global trade with the aim of doubling this by 2022.

The African Continental Free Trade Area involves 55 member states across Africa, and if signed will be the world’s largest free-trade area, by number of countries. It would establish a single market of more than 1.3 billion people and is expected to be about 2 billion by 2025 with a gross domestic product of more than \$3 trillion.

The liberalisation of trade is expected to lead to a predictable environment for investment, industrialisation and value addition. As such it will create opportunities for employment and increased household incomes

Uganda has opportunity for the larger African market for the export of its goods, services and assets. This will create more enterprises, generate incomes and create jobs thus meeting public policy objectives and national aspirations in NDP II and

Vision 2040. In addition to EAC, COMESA and Tripartite markets, Uganda is targeting key markets such as Nigeria, Ghana, Tunisia, Cameroon, Morocco, and Algeria. The following products stand to benefit: livestock products and beef, coffee, tea, fish, steel and iron, dairy, sugar, cement, fruits and juices. Services will include: education, tourism & travel, communication, transport & logistics, financial services, business and professional services, among others.

Uganda has been at the fore front in pursuing regional integration agenda, through the EAC, COMESA and the IGAD, the EAC-COMEA-SADC Tripartite trade negotiation which aims to consolidate our regional trade and therefore sees no contradictions in pursuing the African Continental Free Trade Area.

The Cabinet session on 19th March 2018 endorsed Uganda's signing of the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area that will take place on 21st March 2018, in Rwanda Kigali. Uganda delegation headed by the Minister of Foreign Affairs is currently in Kigali, Rwanda to sign the agreement.