

a theme for Peace through WTO

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Trade is a powerful instrument to create jobs and eradicate poverty and thereby abating conflicts and violence. The AfCFTA will have its fair share

Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, and Sao Tome & Principe) have ratified the AfCFTA Agreement. The AfCFTA offers opportunities for these countries to

WTO to prepare for the start of trading of the AfCFTA on 1st July, 2020.

**Your Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

That brings me to share to you where we are in terms of preparation to implement the AfCFTA as well as to start trade by July 1, 2020.

At this stage, we have secured 54 signatories out of 55 Member States. The status of ratifications stands at 28. Three of the countries that have ratified the AfCFTA Agreement are the process of accession to the WTO. These are: Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia and Sao Tome & Principe.

Key elements of the outstanding work are on rules of origin, tariff concession, specific commitments on trade in services, establishment of the AfCFTA

Secretariat, Non-Tariff Barriers Monitoring, Reporting and Elimination Mechanism, Pan African Payments and Digital System, national level preparations and African Trade

On Trade in Services Member States undertook to submit their initial offers at the latest by 31st January 2020. Some Member States are yet to submit.

Work on Rules of Origin is advanced and we will be able to submit complete package to the Assembly during its extra-ordinary session to take place in May this year in South Africa.

As we move towards the start of trading, we are advocating that all African Union Member States sign and ratify the Agreement Estab]TJETBT1 0 0 1 35695

trading. Key elements of national level preparations: are aligning national laws to the AfCFTA Agreement and ensuring that the required documents to facilitate trade under the AfCFTA are produced, distributed and brought to the attention of all stakeholders.

In addition, all of Member States are required to formulate national AfCFTA Strategies as well as set up National AfCFTA Committees where no similar structures exist. These structures are targeted to draw the participation of stakeholders from among others: the executive and legislative wings of government; private sector; labour; youth; women; civil society; academia and small-scale cross border traders.

**Your Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

The AfCFTA Agreement as a development program includes Phase II Negotiations and beyond. We have a Single African Air Transport Market, a Protocol on Free Movement of People as well as preparing to negotiate protocols on Investment, Intellectual Property Rights and Competition Policy. We are in the process of establishing Technical Working Groups which will give key inputs in the negotiations. It is anticipated that Phase II negotiations on Investment, Competition Policy, and Intellectual Property Rights will conclude by December this year. We also secured a mandate from the just ended Summit to embark of Phase III negotiations focused on e-commerce immediately after conclusion of the second

General has been appointed by the just ended Assembly.

I will conclude by