

# Information Brief on the CFTA

Third World Network-Africa

7<sup>th</sup> February, 2018

Extra-Ordinary Summit on Africa's CFTA Scheduled for March 2018 in Kigali, Rwanda

African Heads of State have scheduled an Extra-Ordinary summit on 21<sup>st</sup> March, this year in Kigali, to consider and sign a Framework Agreement on a Continental Free Trade Area (CFTA). This follows the adoption of the Framework Agreement on the CFTA as well as Protocols on Trade in Goods and Protocols on Trade in Services with an in-built agenda by the Trade Ministers in December 2017 in Niamey, Niger.

The decision to meet, consider and sign the agreement was taken by Africa's political leaders at the 30th Ordinary Session of the African Union (AU) Summit which ended on 29 January 2018 in the Ethiopian capital, Addis Ababa. In a [press release](#) issued last week following the Summit, the Heads of State stated specifically that "On the African Continental Free Trade Area (CFTA), the Assembly decides to hold an Extraordinary Summit on 21 March 2018, preceded by an Extraordinary Session of the Executive Council on 19<sup>th</sup> March 2018 in Kigali, Rwanda, to consider the CFTA Legal instruments and sign the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area...".

Some fine-tuning and legal scrubbing is required. So currently, a two-week meeting at the technical and senior trade officials level is underway in Addis Ababa, which will span the whole of this week and the next-5<sup>th</sup> -17<sup>th</sup> February 2018- to tidy up the agreement as part of preparations towards the Extra-Ordinary Summit in Kigali.

The main outcomes of the CFTA were arrived at through series of meetings especially getting to the end of 2017. The Africa Union Commission (AUC) first organised a three-week meeting in Abuja, Nigeria, from the 6<sup>th</sup>-25<sup>th</sup> November 2017, for the Technical Working Groups (TWG) and the 8<sup>th</sup> Negotiating Forum. The TWGs that were present included Trade in Services, Dedicated Session on Goods, Rules of Origin working Group, Working Group on Customs Procedures and Transit and Technical Barriers to Trade Group. The 8<sup>th</sup> negotiating forum arrived at three outcomes on the CFTA-Framework Agreement on the CFTA, Protocol on Goods and Protocols on Services and an in-built agenda.

This was immediately followed by a week-long meeting of senior trade officials and African Ministers of Trade from 27<sup>th</sup> November to 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2017 in Niamey, Niger. At that meeting the Trade Ministers approved off the three outcomes on the CFTA and tasked the technical and the senior officials to tidy-up the agreement within the first quarter of 2018.

The CFTA was launched by the Heads of State in June 2015 and was scheduled to be concluded in 2017. However various stakeholders have been worried with the speedy agenda of the CFTA processes and how the eventual outcome will address Africa's need for structural economic transformation.

1

For more information contact Sylvester Bagooro at Third World Network (TWN-Africa). TWN-Africa is the Secretariat of the Africa Trade Network (ATN). Emails: [sbagooro@twnafrica.org](mailto:sbagooro@twnafrica.org) or [policeconomy@twnafrica.org](mailto:policeconomy@twnafrica.org). Tel: +233 302 511419