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SEATINI-UG WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

UPDATE OF THE ONGOING CFTA NEGOTIATIONS (6TH -17TH FEB 2017)

The African Union Commission organized the First Meeting of the Continental Free Trade Area (CFTA) Technical Working Group from 6th to 17th February 2017 in Kigali. CFTA was adopted by the 18th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union, held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in January 2012, where a decision was taken to establish a Continental Free Trade Area (CFTA) by an

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indicative date of 2017. The Summit also endorsed the Action Plan on Boosting Intra-Africa Trade (BIAT) which identifies seven clusters: trade policy, trade facilitation, and productive capacity, trade related infrastructure, trade finance, trade information, and factor market integration. The CFTA will bring together fifty-four African countries with a combined population of more than one billion people and a combined gross domestic product of more than US \$3.4 trillion. The main objectives of the CFTA are to create a single continental market for goods and services, with free movement of business persons and investments, and thus pave the way for

accelerating the establishment of the Customs Union.

The objectives of the on-going negotiations in Kigali, Rwanda is to provide the experts with a background of the CFTA and enable an appreciation of the groundwork covered so far; to provide an understanding of the approved terms of reference so that the Technical working Groups appreciate the nature and breadth of their assignments; to provide experts of their assignments and lastly to provide experts with an overview of the draft legal text and appendices which will be used as inputs to the negotiations. The meeting is attended by relevant experts in the technical areas representing each African Union Member state from the Regional Economic Communities (REC's), other members of the continental Task Force (CTF) and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)

The meeting takes into account the first aspiration of the 10 year plan of Agenda 2063 whose objective is to see “A prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development” This meeting is used as an avenue for fast-tracking the negotiations and in by doing so the technical working groups focus attention on Trade in services , non-tariff barriers(NTBs), Technical Barriers To Trade(TBTs) , Sanitary and

phytosanitary (SPS) measures , rules of origin , legal and institutional affairs , trade remedies, customs procedures and trade facilitation.

It should be noted that even though CFTA is associated with some benefits, it is still not certain that it will address Uganda's trade deficit; promote industrialization, agro processing and enhance value addition. It is also not certain whether CFTA will address Uganda's development aspirations of employment creation, structural transformation as

prioritized in the NDP11 and vision 2040. Therefore it is imperative for Uganda to ensure that all necessary stakeholders (government ministries, government MDAs, CSOs, academia and private sector) effectively participate so as to ensure that the CFTA outcomes address these challenges.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE VISIT www.seatiniuganda.org

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