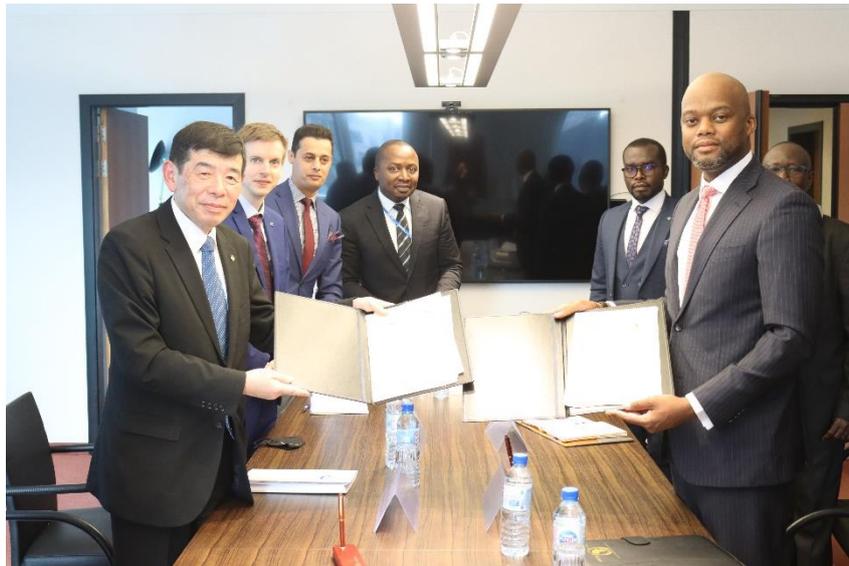




15th February 2022

The AfCFTA and the World Customs Organisation (WCO) join forces to operationalise the liberalisation of trade



Brussels, 15th February 2022: Today, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Secretariat and the World Customs Organisation (WCO), aimed at operationalising the tariff schedules and ensuring additional free and efficient movement of goods in Africa.

The MoU was signed in Brussels, Belgium, by H.E. Wamkele Mene, Secretary-General of the AfCFTA Secretariat, and the Secretary-General of the WCO, H.E. Kunio Mikuriya.

The AfCFTA Secretariat and the WCO are united in their shared goal of increasing prosperity in Africa through the liberalisation of trade on the Continent. This MoU represents the next logical step for the two organisations as they work to reduce barriers to trade across Africa by connecting Customs systems, populating the AfCFTA Tariff Book and providing capacity building for Customs officials and administration. The collaboration is set to capacitate the AfCFTA with:

- i. technological systems that would allow standardization of data and connectivity of Customs systems
- ii. a developed AfCFTA E -Tariff-Book;
- iii. enhanced skills and expertise of Customs officials in operationalising the AfCFTA;
- iv. migration of all AfCFTA Member States to HS 2022;
- v. effective start of trading using the AfCFTA tariff Book

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The agreement will allow the two organisations to work together and support each other as they address logistical challenges whilst seeking to implement programmes and develop trade across Africa.

Mr. Wamkele Mene, Secretary-General of the AfCFTA Secretariat, said: “The MoU would enable the WCO to partner with the AfCFTA in ensuring that Customs Administrations are fully equipped to implement the AfCFTA Agreement.”

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Note to Editors:

1. About the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Secretariat

AfCFTA is the world’s largest free trade area since the formulation of the World Trade Organisation. It aims to bring together all 55 member states of the African Union, covering a market of more than 1.2 billion people, including a growing middle class and a combined gross domestic product of \$2.6 trillion. It works towards several objectives, most importantly to create a single market for goods and services, having the potential to boost intra-African trade by 52.3 percent.

To find out more, please visit our website <https://au-afcfta.org>

2. About the World Customs Organisation (WCO)

The World Customs Organization (WCO) is the only intergovernmental organisation focused uniquely on customs matters. With 184 Members across the globe collectively processing 98% of world trade, the WCO is recognised as the voice of the customs community. It is noted for its expertise in developing global standards, simplifying and harmonising customs procedures, trade security, trade facilitation, customs enforcement and compliance, the Harmonized System goods nomenclature, valuation, origin, and customs capacity building.

To find out more, please visit our website: <http://www.wcoomd.org>

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