
**SPEAKING NOTES
FOR
HIS EXCELLENCY WAMKELE MENE
SECRETARY-GENERAL, AFCFTA SECRETARIAT**

ON OCCASION OF THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF
THE AFCFTA SUPPORT PROGRAMME AND
THE GRANT OF £35 MILLION

LONDON, UK

29 MARCH, 2022

PROTOCOLS

Excellencies,

Distinguished Guests,

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good afternoon.

1. I'm delighted that today the AfCFTA Secretariat and the UK Government of Great Britain and Northern Ireland are revealing a new AfCFTA support programme for the 2021-2026 period in the amount of up to £35 million.
2. Certainly, our cooperation is not new, given that in September last year, we signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) ushering us into a partnership for strengthening cooperation related to trade facilitation in Africa.
3. Indeed, trade facilitation is vital for the attainment of AfCFTA's ambitious objective of boosting intra-Africa trade. The Agreement Establishing the AfCFTA contains provisions on trade facilitation.
4. The AfCFTA Protocol on Trade in Goods contains two Annexes dedicated to Trade Facilitation: Annex 3 on Customs Cooperation and Mutual Administrative Assistance, which covers State Parties' cooperation in all areas of customs administration; and Annex 4 on Trade Facilitation dealing with the simplification and harmonization of international trade procedures and logistics to expedite importation, exportation and transit processes. Thus, through the AfCFTA we have an

opportunity to expedite the movement, clearance and release of goods including goods in transit across borders within State Parties on the continent.

5. Of Africa's 55 countries, more than a quarter are landlocked, presenting these countries with unique challenges associated with their lack of direct territorial access to the ocean front resulting in high trade facilitation costs.
6. Therefore, establishing effective and efficient AfCFTA trade corridors is critical for the seamless flow of goods across the continent, boosting intra-Africa trade, and increasing Africa's connectivity and integration into the world economy.
7. As Secretariat, our programmes for the next few years will aim at harmonizing customs, transit and trade facilitation processes across the continent. With these, and initiatives such as that of the UK's, we would like to re-write the story of trade facilitation in Africa.
8. This year, we expect the disruptions brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic to resolve and economic and trading activities normalize. As you know, the pandemic did not spare our borders or our vital trade corridors.
9. Our ambition now is to see commercially meaningful trading in "Made in Africa" products taking place, across the length and breadth of our continent, to create jobs and economic opportunities for Africans, especially women and the youth.
10. This new AfCFTA support programme is, therefore, timely to facilitate the implementation of the AfCFTA across the continent.
11. We welcome all friends and allies who are willing to support an integration process that is led by Africa for Africans.

12. As the AfCFTA Secretariat, we reiterate our continuing commitment to coordinating the implementation of the AfCFTA, and facilitating discussions among our State Parties and non-State Parties. We will also continue to share necessary information to ensure that our State Parties and non-State Parties derive the full benefits from the continental market.

13. Finally, I'd like to acknowledge the presence of our development partners. We're deeply grateful for your support, through which we're able to advance our continental integration and development results that make a real difference to the lives of Africans, leaving no one behind.

Thank you