



AfCFTA/COM/15/SGREPORT/**DRAFT**

**15TH MEETING OF THE AfCFTA COUNCIL
OF MINISTERS RESPONSIBLE FOR TRADE**

**REPORT OF THE
SECRETARY-GENERAL**

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SECRETARIAT

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Honourable Ministers, Ladies, and Gentlemen;

1. In this report, I will provide an update on the developments within the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) from July to October 2024. I will outline key achievements and progress since my last report. The report is organized into four main sections:
 - **Section One:** The status of ratifications, submission of Tariff Offers, Schedules of Specific Commitments and outstanding negotiations.
 - **Section Two:** The Status of AfCFTA implementation.
 - **Section Three:** Stakeholder engagements.
 - **Section Four:** Administration and Human Resources.
 - **Section Five:** Recommendations.

SECTION ONE: STATUS OF RATIFICATIONS AND OUTSTANDING NEGOTIATIONS

A. STATUS OF RATIFICATIONS

1. As of October 2024, 48 State Parties out of the 54 signatories to the Agreement have ratified and submitted their instruments of ratification to the African Union Commission (AUC). Six (6) countries, namely **Benin, Libya, Madagascar, Somalia, South Sudan, and Sudan**, have not yet ratified the Agreement, and **Eritrea** remains the only country that has not signed it. We are hopeful that all African countries will soon participate, ensuring no one is left behind and that the African people can fully benefit from this Agreement.
2. I am pleased to report that my recent engagement with the State of Eritrea has demonstrated the authorities' commitment to the AfCFTA process, and I am optimistic that Eritrea will join in due course.

B. PROTOCOL ON TRADE IN GOODS

i. Market Access

3. In the area of Trade in Goods, the number of submitted Provisional Schedules of Tariff Concessions (PSTCs) has increased to 49, with 46 having been technically verified and adopted. Since the last Council of Ministers meeting, the verification of Mozambique and Zimbabwe's PSTCs has been concluded. During this meeting, the Honourable Ministers will receive these tariff offers, which are recommended for adoption.
4. Six countries have yet to finalize and submit their tariff offers. The Secretariat will continue to provide technical support to help these countries complete their submissions. The countries still pending submission are Libya, Sudan, Eritrea, Somalia (which is awaiting confirmation on adopting the EAC Customs Union offer, now that it is a member), Djibouti, and the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR).
5. Regarding the pending finalization of the Schedule of Tariff Concessions (STCs), and in line with Council's recent decision urging State Parties to finalize and submit their complete STCs, I am pleased to report that tariff reductions for the sensitive list of category B will begin on January 1, 2026. Consequently, the finalisation of the full STCs will be a primary focus for 2025. This period is crucial for enhancing trade liberalization among AfCFTA State Parties, aiming for 97% tariff liberalization across Categories A and B.

ii. Rules of Origin

6. Since the 12th COM meeting in Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania, in December 2023, where HS 8716 was concluded, the percentage of agreed tariff lines remains

at 92.43%, including Chapters 61 and 62. This continues to create uncertainty for our private sector in Textiles and Automotive.

7. However, this meeting will receive a positive recommendation for adopting the transposition of Appendix IV to HS 2022 and the adoption of review mechanisms for the agreed rules of origin.

iii. Non-Tariff Measures

8. I am pleased to report the following recent developments in the area of non-tariff measures:
 - i. The AfCFTA NTB Online Mechanism Mobile Application was launched during the Biashara Afrika event in Kigali Rwanda, last month. This mobile app is designed to enhance the private sector's user experience by facilitating the reporting, monitoring and elimination of trade barriers,
 - ii. We have developed a draft Agreement for Mutual Acceptance and Recognition of Conformity Assessment Results (MRA), which is currently under review by the TBT Subcommittee. Once finalized, the MRA will be a crucial tool for implementing the agreement, enabling the private sector to operate within a more harmonized regulatory environment.
 - iii. The Secretariat is working on the Development of the SPS and TBT Notification System/Portal as one of the AfCFTA Operational Instruments. This is aimed to facilitate the operation of transparency provisions by State Parties, enhance clarity, predictability in the business environment, and reduce trade disruptions.

9. While each of these measures addresses specific challenges in the trade environment, collectively, they are designed to streamline procedures, reduce costs, and enhance the operational effectiveness of the AfCFTA. This, in turn, supports the broader objectives of economic integration, increased intra-African trade, and the development of regional value chains that are competitive on a global scale.

C. PROTOCOL ON TRADE IN SERVICES

10. In the area of trade in services, the following key strides were made during the review period:

i. Schedules of Specific Commitments

11. Twenty-two (22) Schedules of Specific Commitments (SSCs) have been adopted across the five priority sectors: Business, Communication, Financial, Tourism, and Transport Services. These are currently being incorporated into national legislation by the involved State Parties. During its 13th session, Council endorsed two additional SSCs from the Republic of Botswana and the Union of Comoros, and the 14th Committee on Trade in Services (CTIS) meeting considered Ethiopia's initial offer. The Committee is also reviewing drafts from Angola and Morocco, marking substantial integration progress under the AfCFTA framework.

ii. Regulatory Frameworks Development

12. Significant progress has been made on the Regulatory Frameworks for Communications and Financial Services, which aim to enhance market predictability and transparency. These drafts are in the final review stages, with comments due by November 18, and are scheduled for presentation at the

next Council of Ministers meeting. Meanwhile, work has begun on the Transport and Tourism services frameworks, supported by capacity-building sessions and upcoming stakeholder engagements.

iii. Outstanding Negotiations

13. Twenty-one draft Schedules of Specific Commitments (SSCs) and initial offers from Mozambique and the Sahrawi Republic are still outstanding, which will complete the first round of negotiations once finalized. The CTIS has emphasized the importance of ongoing support for State Parties that are still finalizing their drafts, to facilitate their integration into the Guided Trade Initiative on Services. The Secretariat remains committed to assisting these parties in this process.

iv. Trade in Services Portal

14. Following a presentation on a COMESA services portal by Afreximbank, the AfCFTA Member States have requested the Secretariat to develop a similar portal to support ongoing negotiations. This portal will centralize negotiation materials, serving as a comprehensive repository and facilitating subsequent rounds of negotiations.

D. PROTOCOL ON INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS

15. The AfCFTA Secretariat has made significant strides in developing the Protocol on Intellectual Property Rights as mandated by the 36th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union. To date, six of the nine draft annexes, including Copyright and Related Rights, Patents, Utility Models, Marks, the AfCFTA Intellectual Property Office, and Industrial Designs, have been finalized.

16. We are now developing additional annexes on Plant Variety Protection, Geographical Indications, Traditional Knowledge, Traditional Cultural Expression, and Genetic Resources. Honourable Ministers, you will receive a comprehensive work program for finalizing these negotiations by October 2025.

E. PROTOCOL ON INVESTMENT

17. I am delighted to report that the Protocol on Investment, developed under the leadership and guidance of Honourable Ministers, is receiving global recognition and placing Africa at the forefront of investment policy reforms. The Protocol's innovative features are shaping new approaches to investment, particularly in areas such as sustainable development and climate change. This reflects Africa's proactive approach to shaping its economic future and defining its narrative on the global stage.

18. As Honourable Ministers are aware, the Protocol on Investment mandates the development of an Annex on Dispute Prevention, Management, and Resolution, as specified in Article 46(3). While negotiations have significantly progressed, resulting in a stable draft annex, consensus has yet to be reached regarding the incorporation of Investor-State Arbitration within the AfCFTA legal framework. A legal opinion has determined that incorporating this mechanism would require amending the AfCFTA Agreement. This critical issue requires further deliberation by Council, especially considering global trends favouring state-state dispute settlements.

F. DIGITAL TRADE

19. Following the adoption of the AfCFTA Protocol on Digital Trade in February 2024, the Committee on Digital Trade has been diligently developing and negotiating eight critical annexes, aiming for finalization by October 2024.

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20. These annexes are: (i) Rules of Origin, (ii) Cross-Border Digital Payments, (iii) Cross-Border Data Transfers, (iv) Criteria for Determining the Legitimate and Legal Public Interest Reasons for Disclosure of Source Code, (v) Digital Identities, (vi) Financial Technology, (vii) Emerging and Advanced Technologies, and (viii) Online Safety and Security.
21. These efforts are designed to address demographic challenges by creating a unified digital market across Africa, aimed at closing the digital divide. The annexes promise to transform trade practices, enhance operational efficiency, and foster innovation in digital services, reflecting a strong continental commitment.
22. Honourable Ministers, your approval of these Annexes is key to unlocking the potential benefits of digital trade for our continent. We are on the cusp of fulfilling the expectations of our young people and MSMEs, given the significant job creation potential these eight Annexes offer. We commend your ongoing commitment and look forward to continuing our journey towards a fully integrated and digitally empowered Africa.
23. I commend the tireless efforts and unwavering dedication of our member states in these groundbreaking initiatives in digital trade. Africa is at the forefront of global efforts in this domain, demonstrating significant advancements and adopting innovative approaches in both investment and digital trade policy. By setting new standards internationally, we are not only advancing Africa's interests but also showcasing our capabilities in these critical sectors
24. To sustain this momentum, the Secretariat, in collaboration with the Government of Zambia, will host the inaugural Digital Trade Forum in early 2025 in Lusaka. Themed "Boosting Digital Trade to Accelerate AfCFTA Implementation," this forum will convene all relevant stakeholders vital to powering the inclusive digital One Africa Market.

G. PROTOCOL ON COMPETITION POLICY

25. Following the adoption of the AfCFTA Protocol on Competition Policy in February 2023, the Committee on Competition Policy has commenced work towards the implementation of the Protocol and developing and negotiating critical regulations. The regulations for the implementation of the Protocol on Competition Policy have been drafted and will be presented to State and non-State parties for consideration later this month. These regulations will also be discussed with the Heads of Competition Authorities at their meeting scheduled for the first quarter of 2025.

26. Efforts to operationalize the Competition Authority and Tribunal are underway, following the roadmap adopted by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government. Meanwhile, the Secretariat has been actively engaging with governments and other stakeholders to promote the protocol's ratification.



SECTION TWO: STATUS OF AfCFTA IMPLEMENTATION

Honourable Ministers, ladies, and gentlemen;

27. I will now provide an update on the status of the Agreement's implementation.

A. THE AfCFTA GUIDED TRADE INITIATIVE

i. Trade in Goods

28. Following the directive from the 17th Extraordinary Session of the AU Assembly in November 2022, we have expanded the scope of the Guided Trade Initiative (GTI) to unlock broader trade and investment opportunities in the continent. Participation has increased from seven to thirty-nine countries, reflecting a strong collective commitment to intra-African trade.

29. In the year to date, GTI missions have visited multiple countries, including Morocco, Malawi, Mauritius, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Sierra Leone, Senegal, Equatorial Guinea, Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Republic of Congo, Lesotho, and Zambia. These missions have fostered substantial connections. In terms of engagement, we connected with 236 private sector representatives in 2023 and 394 in 2024, provided training for 440 participants in 2023 and 645 in 2024, and interacted with 105 public agencies in 2023 and 60 in 2024. Additionally, we issued 1,264 certificates of origin for a diverse array of products, underscoring our potential to foster trade diversification and resilience across Africa.

30. In collaboration with interested countries, we initiated the establishment of Trade Aggregators to integrate MSMEs into continental value chains. Thus far, Ghana, Egypt, Rwanda, Kenya, and South Africa have appointed AfCFTA Trading Companies to further these efforts.

31. Overall, the GTI has provided crucial insights. For instance, the success of trades under the initiative reaffirms the robustness of the AfCFTA's legal framework. It also highlights the critical need for affordable and preferential

trade finance solutions to support our traders, in addition to emphasizing the importance of active and sustained business-to-business networking for consolidating trade gains.

32. Having successfully met its initial objectives, the GTI's role is now complete, and the AfCFTA's committees, subcommittees, and the Secretariat are well-equipped to sustain this momentum.

33. Looking ahead, we will intensify private sector engagement through the Biashara Africa Project, which will encompass roadshows, trade forums, B2B events, and broader sector engagements. A detailed strategy for the Biashara Africa private sector will be presented at the next Council of Ministers meeting.

34. I extend my sincere gratitude to the pilot countries and early adopters for demonstrating that the benefits of the AfCFTA are indeed ripe for those who are ready to engage.

ii. Trade in Services

35. To support participation in the Guided Trade Initiative on Services (GTIS), particularly in tourism, the Secretariat held the 4th Committee meeting focused on this sector. Tourism is recognized as a key area for liberalization due to its potential to drive industrialization, job creation, and economic linkages across creative industries, transport, agriculture, and manufacturing. This strategy aims to utilize tourism's extensive economic impact and foster cross-sector integration.

36. Additionally, the Secretariat is enhancing the movement of business persons across the continent, improving the service supply chain. Technical missions are being conducted to support State Parties that have sought assistance, with a focus on scoping and matchmaking to help the private sector effectively

target key markets under the AfCFTA. These tailored country programs are designed to enable businesses to strategically capitalize on AfCFTA opportunities, aligning market objectives with broader economic integration goals.

B. BIASHARA AFRIKA

37. The second edition of the Biashara Afrika Business Forum, held in Kigali, Rwanda from October 9 to 11, 2024, was a resounding success. The event drew around 1,400 participants, including policymakers and business leaders, and facilitated discussions on crucial topics like air transport under the AfCFTA, the enhancement of intra-African trade, and the need for better infrastructure and regulatory frameworks.
38. Key issues addressed included empowering women and youth in trade, improving digital payment systems, and strengthening regional value chains in sectors like agriculture and pharmaceuticals. The forum also saw the signing of three Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) between AfCFTA Trading Companies from Kenya, Ghana, Egypt, and Rwanda to bolster collaboration.
39. A vibrant exhibition showcased the economic potential of 30 member states and 120 businesses, leading to about 60 potential trade agreements among countries including Burundi, Ghana, Nigeria, Lesotho, Rwanda, Zambia, and Tanzania. This highlighted the growing interconnectedness of the continent and provided substantial networking opportunities, particularly in sectors like agriculture, technology, manufacturing, and services. Key recommendations from the forum focused on enhancing government-private sector collaboration, addressing trade finance issues, and developing supportive policies for MSMEs.

40. Overall, the Biashara Afrika Business Forum served as an essential platform for strategizing on leveraging the AfCFTA to unlock economic opportunities across Africa, marking a significant step forward in promoting intra-African trade.

C. WOMEN AND YOUTH IN TRADE

41. With the successful adoption of the Protocol on Women and Youth in Trade, the Secretariat has initiated the implementation by developing the Ministerial Regulation in accordance with Article 4.4 of the Protocol. This regulation aims to establish an enabling trading environment specifically designed to provide preferential market access for women and youth.

42. Key activities included the 8th and 9th Meetings of the Committee on Women and Youth in Trade, which focused on drafting a Technical Concept Note. This note has guided State Parties and Non-state parties through national consultations to discuss supportive programs and policies for preferential market access under the AfCFTA. Feedback from these consultations highlighted the need to address significant barriers, such as complex customs procedures and the lack of accessible trade documents in local languages.

43. The negotiation process of the Ministerial Regulation involved State Parties, Non-State Parties, and Regional Economic Communities, aiming to include in the regulation measures to eliminate credit access barriers, initiate educational and training programs, facilitate technology transfer, and strengthen institutions to boost the productive capacity of women and youth.

44. The Committee also emphasized the importance of incorporating the Guided Trade Initiative into the Ministerial Regulation to actively enhance the participation of women and youth in AfCFTA.

45. However, consensus was not reached on the threshold per consignment for eligible products to benefit from preferential market access. While some State Parties advocated for maintaining the existing US\$5000 threshold as stipulated under Article 19 of the Annex on Rules of Origin, others argued for increasing it to US\$10000 to provide more substantial benefits for women and youth.

46. These discussions are crucial as they continue to shape the framework that will ensure more inclusive trade benefits across the continent.

D. THE AfCFTA YOUTH SYMPOSIUM

47. Regarding the AfCFTA Youth Symposium, the Government of Kenya and the Secretariat have resolved previous scheduling conflicts and agreed to co-host the next edition of the Symposium in January 2025.

E. CUSTOMS UPDATE

48. Under the corridor approach approved by the AU Assembly, the Directorate of Customs Administration has conducted diagnostic assessments across key trade corridors, notably the Djibouti-Ethiopia corridor vital for Ethiopia's trade. Recommendations from these assessments are enhancing facilitation measures as per the AfCFTA Agreement, with around 40 border crossings and several continental ports assessed to improve connectivity.

49. In collaboration with Afreximbank, the Directorate has drafted a Regulatory Framework for an AfCFTA Transit Guarantee Scheme to simplify transit traffic and reduce border delays. This builds on regional successes to create a continental single bond guarantee.

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50. The Directorate has updated the AfCFTA E-Tariff book to include Rules of Origin and verified the Schedules of Tariff Concessions with 17 Member States. Efforts are ongoing to develop the AfCFTA E-Certificate of Origin, and an information-sharing platform and Trade Data Analytical tool have been launched to support policy decisions.
51. The Subcommittee on Trade Facilitation, Customs Cooperation, and Transit has overseen the adoption of modern customs practices, including the Harmonized System HS 2022 and automation of customs operations. Key strategic documents have been developed, including Guidelines for Accelerated Customs Clearance, a Trade Facilitation Strategy Document, and an Awareness Campaign Strategy.
52. This year, significant progress has been made in customs training, with three regional workshops already completed and two more planned. Continued regional capacity-building workshops are scheduled to address the needs identified by Member States.

F. THE AfCFTA IMPLEMENTATION REVIEW MECHANISM (AFIRM)

53. The last Council of Ministers meeting adopted the Ministerial Directive on the AfCFTA Implementation Review Mechanism (AFIRM), reinforcing our commitment to the effective implementation of the AfCFTA. AFIRM is overseen by a Dedicated Session of Senior Trade Officials. Today, we present the terms of reference for the Ad-hoc Committee, recommended for adoption at the 18th meeting of Senior Trade Officials. This committee will focus on technical aspects, such as the development of tools and questionnaires for State Party Reviews. I am pleased to announce that Sierra Leone has volunteered for a State Party Review, and we commend their proactive approach. Other State Parties are also preparing to engage in this process.

G. DISPUTE SETTLEMENT MECHANISM

54. Following your directives from the 13th meeting in Durban, South Africa, on January 30-31, the Secretariat has advanced the operationalization of the Dispute Settlement Mechanism. Key activities included a capacity-building workshop for panelists, finalizing the selection of the remaining two members of the Appellate Body, and conducting the 12th meeting of the Dispute Settlement Body (DSB).

55. Significant outcomes from these efforts include:

- i. Review and consideration of the Draft Ministerial Decision regarding the Terms and Conditions of Service for members of the Appellate Body Secretariat, as outlined in Article 10(5) of the Ministerial Directive.
- ii. Review of the Code of Conduct for members of the Appellate Body Secretariat.
- iii. Adoption of the reports from the 5th and 6th meetings of the Selection Committee, which included recommendations for endorsing the selection of the final two members of the Appellate Body.
- iv. The report from the 12th DSB meeting will be submitted for your review shortly. In the coming weeks, the Secretariat plans to hold the 4th meeting of the Appellate Body, the 13th DSB meeting, and an additional capacity-building and induction workshop for panelists.



SECTION THREE: STAKEHOLDER/PRIVATE SECTOR ENGAGEMENTS

A. PRIVATE SECTOR ENGAGEMENT IN DEVELOPMENT OF REGIONAL VALUE CHAINS

56. During the review period, the Secretariat collaborated with State and Non-State Parties to facilitate the development and investment in strategic regional value chains under the AfCFTA framework. The primary focus areas have been agriculture and agro-processing, pharmaceuticals, automotives, transport, and logistics.

57. Key initiatives include:

- i. A specialized unit is being set up at the Secretariat to coordinate and implement the AfCFTA Private Sector Engagement and Value Chains Development Strategy. The initial focus is on the fish value chain within the broader agro-processing sector, supported by resources from the MasterCard Foundation aimed at capacity building for women, youths, and SMEs in cross-border trading in the fisheries sector.
- ii. Efforts are ongoing to develop an additional 225,600MT of Strategic Grains Reserve Systems to boost Zimbabwe's domestic food security and enable grain exports to regional markets under the AfCFTA. We are currently engaging with Afreximbank to support this project.
- iii. The AfCFTA Automotive Taskforce has reviewed progress on the AfCFTA Automotive strategy, including the status of rules of origin negotiations, a continental study on automotive value chains, and the policy brief on New Energy Vehicles. The Taskforce emphasized the need to conclude the rules of origin negotiations, as they directly impact the utilization of Afreximbank funds for local content production.
- iv. Through the AfCFTA Trade and Industrial Development Advisory Council, substantial efforts have been directed towards developing a

vision and action plan for a continental textiles and apparel industry. A final draft document has been prepared for the Council of Ministers' consideration.

58. The Secretariat is conducting an extensive review of the impact investment landscape and ecosystem on the continent to guide further interventions. This includes exploring the potential establishment of a dedicated facility to provide direct investment capital to firms and financial institutions targeting SMEs, youth, and women engaged in strategic AfCFTA value chains.

59. As mandated by the Council of Ministers, the Secretariat, in collaboration with Rwanda's Ministry of Trade and Industry, is developing a continental Agri-Trade Action Plan. This plan aims to enhance the development of regional value chains, spur the industrialization of food products, strengthen the trade environment, and guide efforts towards full trade liberalization in agricultural goods. Progress on this action plan was presented at Biashara Afrika, with finalization expected by the end of the year.

60. These initiatives represent critical steps toward integrating African economies, enhancing industrial capacity, and enabling more effective participation in the AfCFTA.

SECTION FOUR: ADMINISTRATION AND HUMAN RESOURCES

A. HUMAN RESOURCES

61. As approved by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union, the Secretariat has a staff structure of 296 positions. So far, the Secretariat has finalised the recruitment of 80 regular staff. This represents 27% of the regular structure.

62. The data on regular staff stands as follows: 80 regular staff with a gender parity of 44 women (55%) and 36 men (45%). All five (5) regions of the African Union are represented, with representations from 31 out of the 55 African Union Member States (56% of the Member States). Young people represent 31% of the total membership.

63. In 2024, the Secretariat finalized the recruitment of 31 staff under the Phase II Batch 2. Of these 31 staff, 10 have already taken up their duties while 21 have not been able to take up their duties due to a lack of operational budget available for their salaries and benefits.

64. It is important to note that in 2021, through Decision EX.CL/1299(XL), the Member States allocated a budget of 2.9 million dollars for the recruitment of Phase II staff. Unfortunately, for regulatory and procedural reasons, this budget was withdrawn in 2023 when recruitment had not yet been finalized. In January 2024 and July 2024, two decisions were taken by the Member States requesting the African Union Commission to restore the recruitment budget for Phase II to the AfCFTA Secretariat, but no action has been taken to date.

65. In addition, the Secretariat has also set up a program for young people: an internship program for all young Africans in Ghana through the National Service Scheme.

B. ADMINISTRATION

66. In the area of administration, the Secretariat has also initiated a number of activities meant to augment and provide a conducive working environment for the staff of the Secretariat. These projects include:

- i. Measures towards finding a lasting solution to inadequacy of office space for staff. In this instance, we have commenced engagements

with the Government of Ghana and our Development Partners for an office space that can accommodate all the staff.

- ii. development of strategic policies such as the Disaster recovery plan, the Business Continuity Plan, the Assets control and Protection, the Electronic Records and Documents Management systems, Documents and Records Policy, Elaboration and revision of Administration and Human Resources SOP, and the development of a Smart AfCFTA IT campus, as well as the reinforcement of internet connectivity with the adoption of StarLink.



SECTION FIVE: RECOMMENDATIONS

Honourable Ministers, ladies, and gentlemen;

67. In conclusion, our journey towards continental trade integration is making significant strides despite various challenges. To further enhance and accelerate the implementation of the AfCFTA and realize our collective aspirations for the continent, I respectfully submit the following recommendations for your consideration:

- i. Urge Member States that have not yet submitted their tariff offers and schedules of specific commitments to do so promptly to facilitate the AfCFTA's full operationalization.
- ii. Adopt the technically verified Provisional Schedules of Tariff Concessions (PSTCs) for Mozambique and Zimbabwe.
- iii. Urge State Parties to expedite efforts to finalize the full Schedule of Tariff Concessions (STCs) in preparation for tariff reductions for the sensitive list of category B starting January 1, 2026.
- iv. Endorse the adoption of Appendix IV to HS 2022 and the review mechanisms for the agreed rules of origin.
- v. Urge the Committee on Trade in Services (CTIS) to expedite the review of Angola and Morocco's Schedules of Specific Commitments (SSCs) to facilitate their adoption.
- vi. Mozambique and the Sahrawi Republic should be supported to complete their initial offers of SSCs.
- vii. Encourage State Parties with adopted SSCs to promptly gazette and incorporate them into national legislation to facilitate timely implementation of the Trade in Services Protocol.
- viii. Urge State Parties to finalize and submit their draft SSCs for verification and consideration by the CTIS.

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- ix. Urge the Secretariat to expedite the development of a trade in services portal to support ongoing negotiations, similar to the COMESA portal developed by Afreximbank.
 - x. Approve the work program to finalize negotiations of the remaining Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs) annexes by October 2025.
 - xi. Provide guidance on incorporating Investor-State Arbitration within the AfCFTA legal framework.
 - xii. Encourage active participation of Member States in the inaugural Digital Trade Forum in early 2025 in Lusaka.
 - xiii. Approve the digital trade annexes to harness the potential benefits of digital trade for the continent.

I thank you.