

**DECISION ON THE ANNUAL REPORT OF THE UNION AND ITS ORGANS
INCLUDING THE SPECIFIC THEMATIC ISSUES BY
THE HEADS OF STATES, CHAMPIONS**

The Assembly,

- 1. TAKES NOTE WITH APPRECIATION** of the Report of the Union and its Organs including thematic issues by the Heads of State, Champions;
 - (i) DECISION ON THE PROGRESS REPORT ON THE AFRICAN UNION RESPONSE ON COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN AFRICA, BY H.E. CYRIL MATAMELA RAMAPHOSA, PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

The Assembly,

- 2. TAKES NOTE WITH APPRECIATION** of the Report by AU Champion for COVID-19 Response, H.E. Matamela Cyril Ramaphosa, President of the Republic of South Africa;
- 3. COMMENDS** the Champion for the valuable contribution and **ENDORSES** his recommendations as follows:
 - (i) To note the progress report on the implementation of the mandate of the AU COVID-19 Champion;
 - (ii) To encourage the AU Member States to support the proposal for the financial sustainability of Africa CDC as it becomes independent;
 - (iii) To increase efforts and political will to improve vaccination rates in pursuit of the target of 70% vaccination on the Continent; bearing in mind that SARS-COV-2 transmissions surged in many parts of the world during the holiday season and new variants of concern continue to emerge;
 - (iv) To continue to advocate for GAVI, UNICEF and other procurers of vaccines to acquire 30% of their vaccines from Africa;
 - (v) To endorse the draft decision requesting the AU Member States to negotiate a legal instrument to coordinate outbreak preparedness and response on the continent effectively;
 - (vi) To adopt the New Public Health Order Declaration; and
 - (vii) To remain seized with this matter by:
 - Adopting the report of the African Union Champion on COVID-19;
 - Appointing South Africa's President to serve as AU Champion for another two years, up to December 2024; and
 - AU COVID-19 Champion to advocate for the replenishing of the Africa Epidemic Fund.

(ii) **DECISION ON THE REPORT OF H.E. MR. ISSOUFOU MAHAMADOU, FORMER PRESIDENT OF NIGER AND AFRICAN UNION CHAMPION ON THE CONTINENTAL FREE TRADE AREA (AfCFTA)**

The Assembly,

4. **TAKES NOTE WITH APPRECIATION** of the Report of H.E. Mr. Issoufou Mahamadou, the Leader and Champion of the AfCFTA and former President of the Republic of Niger, and **ADOPTS** the recommendations thereof on the progress achieved in the implementation of the AfCFTA;
5. **ALSO TAKES NOTE** of the Report of the 11th Meeting of the Council of Ministers Responsible for Trade held in Gaborone – Botswana on 11 and 12 February 2023;
6. **COMMENDS** the ratification by Botswana, Mozambique and Comoros, making them the 45th, 46th and 47th countries to join the family of State Parties to the AfCFTA Agreement and **URGES** the Member States who have not yet ratified the Agreement to do so by December 2023;
7. **WELCOMES** the submission of tariff offer by SACU the AfCFTA Secretariat and **URGES** the remaining 9 State Parties and Non-State Parties namely Comoros, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Libya, Mozambique, Somalia, Sahrawi Republic, and Sudan to submit their Tariff Offers by June 2023 in order to enable commercially meaningful trading under the AfCFTA preferences which is inclusive of all the AU Member States;
8. **ADOPTS** the Ministerial Regulations on Special Economic Arrangements/Zones so as to enable Goods produced in SEZs to be treated as originating goods;
9. **FURTHER ADOPTS** the recommendation of the Council of Ministers to remove the brackets on Article 9 of the Annex 2 on Rules of Origin of the Protocol on Trade in Goods;
10. **WELCOMES** the launch of the AfCFTA Automotive Strategy and the finalisation of the establishment of the Automotive Task Force launched by the Council of Ministers at their 11th Meeting and **DIRECTS** the Council of Ministers to fast-track the conclusion of the outstanding Rules of Origin on Automotive Sector and Textiles by June 2023;
11. **URGES** the remaining 3 countries namely Ethiopia, Sahrawi Republic and Tunisia to finalise and submit their offers on trade in services;
12. **ADOPTS** the Protocol on Competition Policy as recommended by the Executive Council;

13. **FURTHER ADOPTS** the Protocol on Investment and **REQUESTS** the Council of Ministers to review Articles 19 and 21 of the Protocol on Investment to ensure alignment with domestic legal and constitutional requirements, taking into account historical factors of some Member States and submit these two articles to the Assembly in July 2023;
14. **ALSO ADOPTS** the Protocol to the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area on Intellectual Property Rights (IPR); and **DIRECTS** the AfCFTA Secretariat to develop the necessary Annexes to these respective Protocols and submit them to the relevant AfCFTA Institutions for consideration;
15. **ENDORSES** the recommendation of the Council of Ministers for the *appointment to the Appellate Body of the following 5 selected persons:*

| <i>Full Name</i> | <i>Country</i> | <i>Region</i> |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------|
| 1) Davis Dennis Martin | <i>South Africa</i> | <i>Southern</i> |
| 2) Deyo Mbaïtangamal Julienne | <i>Chad</i> | <i>Central</i> |
| 3) Konan Sommla Clémence Lydie | <i>Côte d'Ivoire</i> | <i>Western</i> |
| 4) Lilongo Baende Cedric | <i>DR Congo</i> | <i>Central</i> |
| 5) Mohamed Sameh Amr | <i>Egypt</i> | <i>Northern</i> |

16. **URGES** AU Member States to constantly organize national consultations and strengthen collaboration between the different ministerial departments so that the decisions of the Ministers of Trade are not reopened for substantive discussions during the deliberations of other Policy Organs of the African Union; and
17. **REQUESTS** the Champion/Leader of the AfCFTA, H.E. Mahamadou Issoufou, to submit a report on the status of implementation of the AfCFTA to the 5th Mid-Year Coordination Meeting of July 2023.