

**Remarks**  
**H.E. Ahmed Isse Awad**  
**Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation**  
**African Union Extraordinary Session**  
**Continental Free Trade Area (CFTA)**  
**Kigali, Rwanda**  
**March 21st, 2018**

**Excellency President Paul Kagame, President of the Republic of Rwanda,  
Chairperson of the African Union**

**Excellency Mahamadou Issoufou, President of the Republic of Niger  
Champion of the African Continental Free Trade Area Agreement**

**Honourable Heads of State, Government and Heads of Delegations**

**Excellency Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the African Union  
Commission**

**Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Let me first extend greetings from my President, **His Excellency Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed Farmajo** who was unable to attend today's historical African Union Summit.

Let me also express my deep gratitude to **President Paul Kagame**, the government and the people of Rwanda for the warm welcome and hospitality that my delegation and I have received during our stay in this beautiful city of Kigali.

We also recognize the great efforts of **H.E. Mahamadou Issoufou, President of The Republic of Niger** for championing this ambitious project of the CFTA and **H.E. Moussa Faki Mahamat**, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission and his colleagues at the African Union Commission for leading the process.

## **Excellency,**

The CFTA is the greatest opportunity the African continent has to fulfil its potential by putting its resources and citizens to the most productive use for our common development. As we launch the African Continental Free Trade Area, we must remember that the world is changing faster.

When we create partnerships that empower our people in accessing greater opportunities; we are not only striving to realize our economic potential, but we also grow together. The CFTA is a necessary step needed in developing a prosperous Africa and the fruits of this agreement is for the future of our youth and that of the next generation. More importantly it cements our unity, preserves our independence, affirms our dignity and enhance our place in the International System.

## **Excellency,**

Somalia adds its voice in support of this historical Agreement and increasing inter-African trade in reforming our continental economy by exploring new ways to expand commerce and investment among us. Yes, there is more work to be done. But today we are sending a strong continental message in determining our own future of shaping Africa's solid trajectory to prosperity.

Somalia pledges to work alongside with the African Union to ensure the ratification and implementation of this agreement so that our people enjoy the benefits of today's milestone decision for generations to come.

In conclusion, I am confident that today is the day we set the foundation for a prosperous future for our continent and for a new era of cooperation and socio-economic development among our nations and our people.

Thank you Chair, **MaraaKozi**