

## **BRIEF ON KENYA AS THE AfCFTA DIGITAL TRADE CHAMPION**

1. On behalf of His Excellency President Dr William Samoei Ruto, the President of Kenya, we would like to congratulate His Excellency Wamkele Mene, the Secretary General of the AfCFTA Secretariat for this well-deserved reappointment as Secretary General at the 37<sup>th</sup> Session of the African Union Assembly of Heads of State and Government on 19th February 2024 in Addis Ababa Ethiopia. This unanimous reappointment is a testament of his outstanding leadership, hard work and dedication towards actualising the objectives we as Africa have set out under the Abuja Treaty and the Agenda 2063 towards creating ‘the Africa we want’.
2. The 37<sup>th</sup> Assembly also adopted the AfCFTA Protocol on Digital Trade and endorsed the recommendation of Kenya to be the Champion of Digital Trade under the AfCFTA. This work is of uttermost importance to us and the Continent, recognizing not only Kenya’s significant strides in digital transformation and digital financial inclusion, demonstrated by the success of M-PESA and the potential hosting of the Pan-African Payment and Settlement System (PAPSS), but specifically what the AfCFTA Protocol on Digital Trade promises for Africa, that is:
  - The development of digital infrastructure
  - Financial inclusion
  - Digital inclusion and meaningful participation of underrepresented groups such as women, youth, indigenous peoples, rural communities, persons with disabilities as well as MSMEs.
  - Development of Digital skills; and
  - Facilitation of Digital innovation and entrepreneurship (etc).
3. The adoption of the AfCFTA Protocol on Digital Trade comes at an opportune time to present a significant opportunity for African countries to build an inclusive, sustainable, and beneficial digital trade ecosystem. The AfCFTA Protocol on Digital Trade will enable African countries to harness the transformative power of technology for economic development and regional and international competitiveness.
4. By creating a harmonised and robust framework, the Protocol reduces barriers to trade, promoting a more efficient and interconnected continental marketplace. This, in turn, promotes digital inclusion, generates sustainable and inclusive economic growth, stimulates economic

activity, encourages innovation, supports cross-border trade, generates sustainable and inclusive economic growth, attracts foreign investment, stimulates job creation, reduces inequality, and subsequently eradicates poverty.

5. I eagerly look forward to engaging with different arms of Government, both domestically and continentally, as we work towards the ratification and implementation of the Protocol. I believe that if we work together through collective action and mutual cooperation, we can effectively address the challenges on the continent, drive forward progress, meet the needs of the private sector, effectively implement the Protocol and consequentially seize and realize the opportunities presented by the AfCFTA Agreement and the Protocol.