

AU's free trade area set for launch in March

KIGALI, Rwanda - The long-awaited Free Trade Area (FTA) that aims to increase intra-regional trade within the continent, will be launched in March this year in Kigali, Rwandan Foreign Affairs Minister, Louise Mushikiwabo, said in a statement obtained on Tuesday in Kigali.



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The proposed FTA would be a key component of the African Union's (AU's) strategy to boost trade within the region by at least 25-30% in the next decade.

The main step toward this new agreement has been reached earlier this week on the sideline of AU Heads of State Summit in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, after African governments approved the adoption of Protocol on Free Movement of People and the official launch of African [air transport market](#).

"A continental FTA is expected to be launched at an extraordinary AU Heads of State Summit this March," said the top Rwandan diplomat.



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Julius Barigaba 28 Dec 2017



The new move comes five years after AU heads of state and government committed to deepen regional integration and boost intra-Africa trade.

FTA will bring together about 53 African nations with a combined population of close to a billion.

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