HORN OF AFRICA INITIATIVE

Horn of Africa Initiative Trade Minister's Meeting

Skylight Hotel, Addis-Ababa, Ethiopia, 03 September 2026, 09:00 – 15:00

Theme: *"One Region, One Shared Economic Space: From Political Commitment to Regional Action"*

Members

- Hon. Amb Gamal Mohamed Hassan, Minister of Commerce and Industry Somalia, Chair
- Ms. Elke Loebel Head of Directorate Horn of Africa, Sahel and Eastern Europe, BMZ, Germany, Co-Chair (virtual),
- Ambassador Heiko Nitzschke, Special Envoy for the Horn of Africa, Germany.
- H.E. Orbis Helaf Orbis, Minister, Ministry of Commerce and Tourism, Djibouti
- H.E. Dr. Kassahun Gofe Balami, Minister, Ministry of Trade and Regional Integration, Ethiopia ,
- H.E. Hon Lee Kinyanjui, Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Investment, Trade and Industry, Kenya
- Hon. Dr. Labanya Margaret Mathya, Minister, Ministry of Trade and Industry, South Sudan
- H.E. Mahasin Ali Yagoub, Minister, Ministry of Trade and Industry, Republic of the Sudan (virtually)
- Dr. Alex Mubiru, Director General for East Africa Regional Development, Integration and Business Delivery, African Development Bank
- Mr. Khalid Adam, Division Manager, Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa (BADEA)
- Ms. Sofie From-Emmesberger, Head of Delegation Ethiopia, European Union
- Mr. Mirza Jahani, Senior Governance Adviser, Africa Strategy Department, Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO), UK
- Mr. Prashant Singh, World Bank Lead, HoAI and Senior Partnerships Specialist, Africa Regional Programs, World Bank

Permanent Observer

- HE. Mr. Workneh Gebeyehu, Executive Secretary, Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD). tbc

Observers

- HE. Mr. Wamkele Mene, Secretary General, African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Secretariat.
- HE. Mr. Magnus Lennartsson, Ambassador of Sweden to Ethiopia and Permanent Representative to the African Union, IGAD and the Economic Commission for Africa.

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The Horn of Africa Initiative Trade Ministers' Meeting will be held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on 3rd September 2026. This engagement with line Ministries is motivated by decision taken in Mogadishu, during the 27th HoAI Ministerial Meeting, to deepen stakeholder ownership and accelerate implementation of policy actions through a "whole of Government" approach.

The meeting will be co-chaired by Hon. Amb Gamal Mohamed Hassan, Minister of Commerce and Industry Somalia, and Ms. Elke Loebel, Head of Directorate Horn of Africa, Sahel and Eastern Europe, BMZ, Germany. Other Principals, or their designated representatives, are invited to attend in person. The link to join the meeting virtually will be provided upon request.

As agreed at the 28th HoAI Ministerial, this meeting will focus on accelerating the implementation of the regional trade agenda, building on various analytical work and stakeholder exchanges since 2020. It will be the first dedicated Trade Ministers' Meeting under the Initiative and will draw on recent technical consultations with national trade authorities, customs administrations, and private sector stakeholders held earlier in 2026. The meeting will focus on the updated trade facilitation roadmap, with particular attention to its priority areas and proposed activities, including the establishment of the HoAI Regional Trade Facilitation Committee.

Discussions will also highlight funding needs and opportunities, private sector engagement, and concrete actions to be supported by Trade Ministers to accelerate regional integration. Ministers will also be requested to the nomination of the RTFC members till end of September. The outcome of these consultations will be shared with HoAI Ministers of Finance at the 29th Ministerial Meeting scheduled for 29-30 September.

As previously agreed amongst HoAI Principals, The Chair will initially speak on behalf of HoA countries and Germany -as Co-Chair -on behalf of Development Partners. All members will make their interventions during the discussion following the presentation, during the various sessions, or under AoB. All presentations will be circulated and uploaded on the HoAI website after the meeting.

The following background documents will be distributed prior to the meeting:

- **The revised Regional Trade Facilitation Roadmap and Priority Actions, including its activities which are the intermediate steps for its implementation**
- **Joint Declaration on the establishment of the Regional Trade Facilitation Committee (RTFC)**
- **Terms of Reference for The Regional Trade Facilitation Committee (RTFC)**
- **45-Days action plan for prioritization of the RTFC**
- **Draft Communique**
- **VC (Teams) link**

HoAI Trade Minister's Meeting Agenda: 09:00-15:00

Time	Agenda Item
09:00-10:00	Registration, Coffee and bilateral meetings (upon request).
10:00 - 10:50	**Opening Session**

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10:00-10:10	Welcoming Remarks by Hon. Dr. Kassahun Gofe Balami, Minister of Trade and Regional Integration of Ethiopia, Host Country.
10:10-10:25	Remarks on behalf of HoAI countries by Hon. Amb Gamal Mohamed Hassan, Minister of Commerce and Industry Somalia, Chair.
10:25 -10:40	Remarks on behalf of Development Partners by Ms. Elke Loebel Head of Directorate Horn of Africa, Sahel and Eastern Europe, BMZ, Germany Co-Chair, (Virtually).
10:40 - 10:50	Remarks by HE Mr. Wamkele Mene, Secretary General, African Continental Free Trade Area Secretariat
10:50–11:25	**Advancing the HoAI Trade Agenda**
10:50-11:15	Presentation of the Regional Trade Facilitation Roadmap (2026-2031), including intermediate steps and priority actions.
11:15-11:25	Presentation of both the Joint Ministerial Declaration for the establishment of the Regional Trade Facilitation Committee (RTFC) and the **45-Days** Action Plan for operationalizing of the RTFC.
11:25 – 12:30	**Dialogue/Reflections on the revised Trade Road Map and DPs Support**
11:25 – 12:30	Ministers and Development Partners will discuss priorities, implementation arrangements, and expectations for the regional trade agenda.
12:30 – 14:00	Lunch Break
14:00 - 14:30	**Showcasing Development Partner Commitments** Lessons learnt and success stories from ongoing operations supporting trade facilitation. Short Presentation on the DRIVE Program Short Presentation on ECOTRADE Project Short Presentation on the BOOST Program
14:30 - 14:45	Any Other Business.
14:45 - 15:00	**Closing Session**
	Closing Remarks by the Chair.
	Signing of the Joint Declaration and Photo
19:30	Official Dinner Hosted by the Chair Secretariat to communicate separately to the participants, on the venue and time of the official dinner.

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