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Addis Ababa, 23 May 2017 (ECA) – The Pan African Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PACCI), in collaboration with the African Trade Policy Centre (ATPC), today concluded a two-day consultative meeting that discussed ways for African chambers of commerce to utilize single windows in enabling cross border trade.

Solomon Afework, First Vice President of the Pan African Chamber of Commerce and Industry, speaking at the beginning of the meeting, said: “The adoption and use of the single window system as a key component of trade policy provides many benefits to the business community as it reduces the transaction cost of trade.”

He added: “As we know, the entry into force of the World Trade Organisation Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) launches a new phase for trade facilitation reforms all over the world and creates a significant boost for commerce and the multilateral trading system as a whole.”

He said it is forecast that full implementation of the TFA will reduce trade cost by an average 14.3 percent.

The coordinator of the ATPC, David Luke, in his opening statement said the elimination of tariffs on the continent will not be enough to bring transformative benefits expected from the Continental Free Trade Area (CFTA) unless aided by the implementation of trade facilitation measures.

Single windows could therefore help in ensuring that the benefits of the CFTA are felt more widely, said Mr. Luke.

Guinea’s Ambassador in Addis Ababa, Sidibe Kaba, stressed the need to mobilize the continent’s governments and private sector in advancing regional integration.

The meeting brought together representatives from the African Chambers of Commerce, EcoBank, African Alliance for E-Commerce, revenue and customs officials, private sector and academia, to share experiences and best practices in trade. They came out with key trade policy recommendations towards the implementation of the single windows.

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