

**REPUBLIC OF BURUNDI****PRESIDENCY OF THE REPUBLIC  
Secretariat-General of the Government****MEDIA RELEASE CONSECUTIVE TO THE CABINET MEETING  
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 11 MARCH 2020**

A Cabinet Meeting was held on Wednesday 11 March 2020 under the chairmanship of His Excellency Pierre Nkurunziza, President of the Republic of Burundi. The following items have been analyzed:

**1. Bill pertaining to the ratification by the Republic of Burundi of the agreement establishing the African Continental Free Trade Zone (ZLECAF), presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs.**

The idea of creating a free trade area in Africa dates from the 1960s. But it was at the Conference of African Heads of State and Government in January 2012 in Addis Ababa that the decision was made on to the framework and the roadmap to fast track the creation of the African Continental Free Trade Area.

Subsequently, negotiations continued to reach an agreement establishing the African Free Trade Area (ZLECAF). This African Free Trade Zone aims, among other things, to create a single market for goods and services, facilitated by the movement of people. It will also contribute to the circulation of capital and people and will facilitate investments.

The Council had analyzed this project and found that it required a much more in-depth study by experts in order to assess the benefits that Burundi could derive from the ratification of this project.

After discussions, the Council noted that the file still needed to be deepened and appointed a team which will assess what Burundi will gain or lose by ratifying or not ratifying this project. The project will be brought back to the Council of Ministers within one month.

The team was also tasked with proposing a permanent multisectoral committee of experts to study and negotiate all the agreements to which Burundi is called upon to enter into.

## **2. Draft ratification of the revised Treaty establishing the Economic Community of Central African States, presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs.**

The Economic Community of Central African States was created in October 1983 and its General Secretariat set up in January 1985. It currently has eleven member states including Burundi. The institutional reform of ECCAS in question today was ordered by the Conference of Heads of State and Government at its 16th ordinary session held on May 25, 2015 in N'Djamena, Chad.

On December 18, 2019, there was an Extraordinary Summit of the Conference of Heads of State and Government of ECCAS devoted to the institutional reform of ECCAS. The purpose of this summit was to examine, validate and sign all the revised basic texts relating to institutional reform produced by the General Secretariat of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS). These adopted and signed texts are:

- The revised Treaty establishing the Economic Community of Central African States
- The revised Protocol relating to the Peace and Security Council of Central Africa
- The organic framework of the Commission of the Economic Community of Central African States
- The Staff Regulations of the Economic Community of Central African States
- The revised Financial Regulations of the Economic Community of Central African States

The Heads of State have undertaken to ratify the revised Treaty within a maximum of six months from the date of signature. By revising this treaty, the aim is to provide the Community with a strong tool, adapted to the current environment and which takes into account the realities of the Central Africa Region to enhance the regional space with a relevant legal tool.

By ratifying this Treaty, Burundi will be able to be part of the organs of this Community, to apply for all political and technical posts in order to properly defend its interests within this community.

At the end of the analysis of this project, the Council adopted it.

**3. Bill establishing the general framework for the operation of Professional Orders in Burundi**, presented by the Minister of Public Service, Labor and Employment.

On December 21, 2018, the Council of Ministers analyzed the draft decree creating the national order of biomedical technologists in Burundi. During this meeting, the Council noted that there are many effective professional orders and others in the making and that there was a need to put in place a general legal framework of reference.

It is in this context that this bill is proposed. It intervenes to ensure legislative and regulatory consistency by subjecting all professional orders to common principles of organization except the Bar Association and the Order of Notaries provided for by the Constitution and which are each organized by law.

After discussions, the project was adopted with a few corrections and finalization by a team designated for this purpose.

**4. Draft decree establishing, organizing and operating a personalized administration of the State called the Directorate of Land Titles**, presented by the Minister of Justice, Civil Protection and Keeper of the Seals.

Since 2005, Burundi has embarked on a policy of decentralization of public administration and land reforms. As part of these land reforms, many projects aimed at securing land rights and modernizing the land administration and management systems have been undertaken.

However, all these efforts still come up against the problem of the scattering of services in charge of land issues. One of the consequences of this situation is the slowness of the registration system, the multiplicity of procedures, costs and delays which discourage the population wishing to register their properties and land transactions.

The implementation of the provisions of the Land Code comes up against the problem of coordination and separation of the Land Titles, National Cadastre and Municipal Land Services. This draft decree solves these problems by implementing reforms in the Land Titles Department so that the land registration sector is a real lever for economic and social development. The objective is to create a new administrative entity bringing together the Land Titles and National Cadastre Services.

At the end of the analysis, the Council noted that the question required an even deeper study and appointed a team which will analyze it with regard to the texts in force. The file will be brought back within two weeks.

**5. Note relating to the commitment of the Government of Burundi for a public-private partnership between the Province of Gitega and a consortium of Dutch private sector companies for the implementation of the project "Implementing Measurable Productive Agri Cooperation Trade (IMPACT)", presented by the Minister of the Interior, Patriotic Training and Local Development**

In 2018, the Government of Burundi established Gitega as the Political Capital of Burundi. This province has just expressed its interest in working with Dutch industrialists in the private sector to contribute to the socio-economic development of rural areas, the development of infrastructure in rural areas, the creation of jobs and the generation of income.

Since April 2019, some Dutch companies have started a feasibility study for this project. In May 2019, a delegation of these companies came to Burundi to discuss this partnership. In November and December 2019, these companies conducted field surveys on how to establish collection points for the storage and distribution of food, especially fruit and vegetables with appropriate technology.

This public-private partnership project plans to result in the installation of a food processing plant in Gitega called "Organic Burundi Food" where the Government would hold 49% of the shares. Processing is the only alternative to increase the value of these products in Burundi, mitigate the deterioration of excess production and increase the lifespan of these products.

The beneficiaries of this project will mainly be farmers in the Provinces of Gitega, Karusi, Kayanza, Mwaro, Muramvya, Ngozi and Rutana organized in agricultural cooperatives.

After analyzing the Note, the Council reiterated its support for the policy of processing Burundian agricultural products. It nevertheless indicated that everything must be done within the framework already outlined by the Government. To this end, the Council appointed a team that will closely monitor this issue to ensure that all stakeholders have been involved and that the procedures required for Public-Private Partnership contracts are being complied with.

**6. Bill pertaining to the ratification by the Republic of Burundi of the Minamata Convention on mercury**, presented by the Minister of the Environment, Agriculture and Livestock.

Mercury is a highly toxic heavy metal that poses a threat to human health and the environment. Aware of the harmful impacts of this substance, the International Community decided, in February 2009, to establish a binding legal instrument.

The related negotiations started in 2010 and led to the adoption, by 140 States, of the Minamata Convention (named after the city where the convention was concluded) in January 2013, whose overall objective is to protect human health and the environment against emissions and releases of mercury and its components.

By ratifying this Convention, Burundi will have undertaken to take appropriate measures to phase out mercury-containing products, to develop and implement a national action plan to eliminate the use of mercury in artisanal mining and educate the public about the negative effects of using mercury.

The Council had analyzed this project and returned it to study first the implications of this ratification and to be sufficiently informed about the countries which have already ratified this Convention.

After analysis, the Council noted that the team which had been designated to re-analyze this project has not yet produced its report and has once again returned the project.

The team was asked to speed up their work so that the project could be brought back to the Council of Ministers within two weeks.

**7. Draft sectoral strategy 2018-2027 of the Ministry of Finance, Budget and Economic Development Cooperation**, presented by the Minister of Finance, Budget and Economic Development Cooperation.

Burundi has a National Development Plan 2018-2027 which is currently the national reference document for development planning. In order to involve all sectors in its implementation, the Government recommended the development of sector strategies with action plans for 2018-2027.

In this context, the Ministry of Finance, Budget and Economic Development Cooperation has drawn up a 2018-2027 sectoral strategy, not only to contribute to the

achievement of certain specific objectives of the National Development Plan, but also to continue the operationalization of the public finance management strategy within the framework of the application of the organic law relating to public finances.

The objective of this sectoral strategy of the ministry is to provide Burundi with a transparent, efficient public finance management system, in line with international standards, respecting the distribution of prerogatives between the institutions and putting public finances serving the country's development and the well-being of its citizens.

At the end of the analysis of this project, the Council adopted it.

## **8. Any Other Business**

- The Minister of Public Health and the Fight against AIDS informed the Council that following the decision to quarantine, for a period of 14 days, people who enter Burundi from countries where the he epidemic of Coronavirus is reported, 29 people among which 16 Burundians are currently at the Hotel Source du Nil, the venue which has been chosen for this purpose.
- The Minister of the Environment, Agriculture and Livestock informed the Council of the irregularities observed in the fertilizer distribution network due to certain speculators. He said there is enough fertilizer and that the situation is being brought under control as many of these speculators have been apprehended. He also said that everything is being done to ensure that the coffee campaign that has already started runs smoothly.
- The Minister of Finance, Budget and Economic Development Cooperation deplored the fact that certain owners of plots are building kiosks and shops beyond the boundaries of their plots, that is to say in the streets. He asked that the authorized services take the necessary measures to discourage this practice.

**Done at Bujumbura, March 12, 2020**

**Prosper NTAHORWAMIYE**  
**Secretary-General and Spokesman**  
**of the Government.-**