

On 10 June, 2015, three of the 8 African Union officially-recognised Regional Economic Communities (RECs) in Africa, namely: the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the East African Community (EAC) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC), after 5 years of negotiations, signed an [Agreement for establishing a common \(Tripartite\) Free Trade Area \(TFTA\)](#).

The Agreement initially covered 26 member states across the three RECs, a number that has now risen to 27 with the entry of South Sudan into the EAC in April 2016. The ultimate aim of the Tripartite Free Trade Area is to reduce gradually the tariffs for all goods traded in the Tripartite bloc to zero percent.

The Tripartite bloc covers 645 million habitants, corresponding to 58% of the total population in Africa. Although the Agreement has been signed by 24 of the 27 Member States (Libya, Eritrea and South Sudan have yet to sign), only 7 countries have ratified it, the last being Burundi, whose Parliament adopted the ratification law in the end of [September 2019](#) and deposited on Thursday, November 28, 2019, during the 25<sup>th</sup>

Anniversary of COMESA. The other countries that have ratified the TFTA Agreement are Namibia, Uganda, South Africa, Egypt, Kenya and Rwanda.

The number of ratifications required for the TFTA Agreement to enter into force are 14.