

The African heads of state meeting in Kampala is today expected to adopt a report on regional trade, arising out of a meeting of the Council of Ministers. The spokesperson of the foreign affairs ministry, Elly Kamahungye, said the council had met earlier and completed a report, which makes key recommendations on a number of issues, including regional trade.

Kamahungye yesterday said the heads of state will discuss how to move the Common Market for East and Southern Africa (COMESA) economic bloc forward after most member states ratified the Free Trade Arrangement (FTA).

"The FTA means that member countries have agreed to remove barriers to trade and it makes COMESA a formidable regional organisation in promoting trade," he said.

Yesterday, five African leaders arrived in the country to attend the COMESA heads of state summit scheduled for today at Speke Resort Munyonyo.

The leaders were Robert Mugabe (Zimbabwe), Mwai Kibaki (Kenya), Joyce Banda (Malawi), Dr. Ikiliou Dhoinine (Comoros) and Ethiopian prime minister Hailemariam Desalegn.

Others were prime ministers Mizengo Kayanza Pinda (Tanzania), Barnabas Sibusiso Dlamini (Swaziland) and Pierre Damien Habumuremyi (Rwanda).

Also expected were vice-presidents Dr. Gervais Rufyikiri (Burundi) and Danny Foure (Seychelles), African Union chairperson Zuma Dlamini and Egyptian minister of investment Osman Saleh.

The summit comes after Uganda ratified the COMESA Free Trade Area, which is expected to increase the volume of Uganda's exports within the region.

By Raymond Baguma

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