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Programme Highlights

February 2022 - Issue #1

Introduction

Two full years since it started, the COVID-19 pandemic has taken considerable toll on the African economy.

Nevertheless, the One Trade Africa programme has held fast to its bold vision and continued to roll out its activities. Working with the key trade experts and stakeholders, we are providing African entrepreneurs with technical guidance training services to help them make the AfCFTA a reality. We are convinced that, second only to universal access to vaccine, increased trade cooperation is key to winning back precious development gains. We believe that Africa's post-Covid recovery starts now and that it relies on those who can drive the march towards the AfCFTA – Africa's MSMEs, its women entrepreneurs and youth.

This is a long-term collective effort. We will see it to it that it is inclusive and works for all – one trade at a time.

Key Achievements



- At least 40 countries covered across Africa



- At least 5,000 MSMEs and entrepreneurs sensitized



- At least 20 BSOs engaged



- At least two global public goods to be released



- An online Resource Centre on the AfCFTA under development

Placing a strategic focus on the cassava sector as a pathway to realizing the AfCFTA



On 31 January 2022, ITC convened a regional AfCFTA forum themed ‘Building capacities of MSMEs of the cassava sector in the AfCFTA.’ The two-day hybrid

event focused on the strategic importance of the cassava sector and its potential as a gateway to implementing the AfCFTA.

The meeting was held in Yaoundé, Cameroun, under the joint aegis of the Ministry of Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises, Social Economy and Handicrafts (MINPMEESA) and the Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa (EMCCA), in the presence of various stakeholders including representatives of the agro-industrial sector.



“Cassava is a strategic commodity in terms of food security, export development and inclusiveness,” said Mr. Ruben Phoolchund, Head of ITC’s Africa for Office at the opening of the Forum.

Underscoring the key role of MSMEs in leveraging the AfCFTA’s financial and socio-economic windfall, H.E. Mr. Achille Bassilekin III, Minister of MINPMEESA said: “African MSMEs need new policies conducive to boosting their productivity and to leveraging existing business opportunities in order to contribute to the emergence of a competitive private sector.”

At the session’s end, the Yaoundé Regional Forum proposed a roadmap outlining the main pathways to strengthen the cassava sector and contribute to the development of agricultural exports within the AfCFTA.

Creating tangible partnerships to power Africa’s MSMEs



On 16 February 2022, the One Trade Africa Programme forged a new milestone by launching a partnership with the Africa Business Council (AfBC). The agreement is designed to help African MSMEs gain access to ITC's and AfBC's extensive networks and leverage the two institutions' wealth of knowledge to actionable business opportunities created by the AfCFTA.

ITC Executive Director Pamela Coke Hamilton said: “Today’s institutional agreement with the AfBC is a big step towards empowering the African private sector to shift from trade and investment potential to concrete business transactions. We are fully committed to translating economic opportunities into commercial partnerships for African firms, in particular SMEs, to generate profits and decent jobs. AfBC and ITC will join forces to ensure that the private sector is driving the transformational agenda of Africa.”

President of AfBC Dr Amany Asfour President of AfBC said: “AfBC and ITC join forces to empower the African Private Sector including MSMEs, women and youth to realize the Africa We Want for a prosperous peaceful integrated Africa through private sector strengthening, policy advocacy for a conducive environment and product development for a competitive standardized quality value added African product.”

Facilitating business connections for African MSMEs at the Intra-African Trade Fair 2021



The Intra-African Trade Fair 2021 (IATF 2021), organized by Afreximbank in collaboration with the African Union and the AfCFTA Secretariat took place from 15 to 21 November in Durban, South Africa. With support from ITC, entrepreneurs from Sierra Leone, Senegal and Guinea attended the event, as part of the West Africa Competitiveness Programme (WACOMP) and INTEGRA programmes to support entrepreneurs in making valuable business connections.

Noellen Barber, Managing Director at Nianda Agriculture and Trading Company, Sierra Leone

“We have met with people interested in our products and I intend to follow up on potential new trade opportunities, especially with countries within Africa.”



Abdoukhadre Diagne, representative of the Organization of Professionals in Information and Communication Technologies (OPTIC), Senegal

“Joining the Intra-African Trade Fair has helped us confirm Senegal’s potential in the African market, expand on these discussions and strengthen the

implementation of our strategy to become a major player in the ICT sector in Africa.”



Advocating for gender mainstream policies to empower women entrepreneurs

In collaboration with One Trade Africa, the Organization of Women in International Trade (OWIT) Nairobi, alongside OWIT Nigeria and OWIT Zimbabwe, held the Africa Women Trade Conference (AWTC) a two-day hybrid event on 25-26 November 2021 in Nairobi, Kenya.

With 200 participants on-site and 1,000 online, the conference brought traders, government agencies, financial institutions, investors, small businesses, and local ecosystem partners together. The event encouraged African women entrepreneurs to take advantage of the AfCFTA's enormous potential for trade within its regional and continental markets.

AWTC's mission is to empower women by enhancing their role in intra-African trade. Specifically, it works to raise awareness on the positive impact of continental trade; to provide a networking platform for female-led businesses; to create new market opportunities for women; to facilitate access to trade; to evaluate innovative financial solutions for women entrepreneurs; to promote e-commerce, and to discuss agriculture as the next frontier for Africa.

Aissatou Diallo, ITC Senior Coordinator for the AfCFTA and Least Developed Countries:

“At ITC we are confident that trade under the AfCFTA will drive larger gains in earning for businesswomen.”



Caroline Gathii, President of OWIT Nairobi: “We are honoured to partner with ITC through the One Trade Africa programme on the Africa Women Trade Conference which is the first of its kind in the region. The conference provides a platform for connections, collaborations, and exchange of ideas between Africa states. Together with ITC we will seek to explore avenues of increasing intra-African trade among women in the region.”



The AWTC gathering, the first of its kind since the AfCFTA entered into force, will be remembered for its determined advocacy for gender mainstreamed trade policies, and for the elimination of barriers women face in trade. The next AWTC is scheduled in Nigeria in the second quarter of 2022.

Agencies forge partnership to help African businesses capitalize on AfCFTA

ITC/UNDP partnership to empower African small businesses



Pamela Coke-Hamilton
Executive Director
International Trade Centre



Ahunna Eziakonwa
Director
Regional Bureau for Africa
United Nations Development Programme

ITC and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) joined forces to empower African small businesses, women and young entrepreneurs to leverage the AfCFTA and expand cross-continental business opportunities. By signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), ITC and UNDP committed to boost the economic empowerment of women, increase economic and employment opportunities for youth, broaden access to trade and market intelligence for small businesses and promote e-commerce to enhance intra-African trade.

ITC Executive Director Pamela Coke-Hamilton: “ITC is committed to making the AfCFTA a platform for the economic transformation of Africa. Together with our partners at UNDP, we can ensure that small businesses in Africa – especially those owned by women and young entrepreneurs – find new markets and new pathways to prosperity.”

UNDP Administrator Achim Steiner: “As a result of the Africa Continental Free Trade Agreement, intra-African trade is expected to grow by 33% along with the potential to lift millions of people out of poverty. Moreover, it will help drive efforts in realizing a green economy – with transformational investments that create new jobs, de-carbonize economies and accelerate efforts to tackle climate change.”

UNDP Assistant Administrator and Director, Regional Bureau for Africa Ahunna Eziakonwa: “This is the new way of working in the United Nations. We are leveraging UNDP’s presence in AfCFTA countries, coupled with ITC’s SME trade expertise, to offer a stronger value proposition to make trade work for the SDGs.”

The MOU also provides both agencies with a framework to support increased competitiveness and resilience of small businesses in developing countries, with a focus on green economy and digital transformation.

Connecting African companies to the Finnish market

On Wednesday 9 February 2022, the One Trade Africa Team participated in a webinar jointly organized by the AfCFTA Secretariat, the Africa Business Network of the Finland Chamber of Commerce, Business Finland, Finnpartnership and the Helsinki Region Chamber of Commerce. The goal of the hybrid event was to provide an update on the status of AfCFTA negotiations and offer African companies practical insight on how to navigate the trade landscape and access the Finnish market.



Key speakers included Ms. Aissatou Diallo, ITC's Senior Coordinator for AfCFTA and Ms. Anne Hatanpää, Secretary General of the Africa Business Network at the Finland Chamber of Commerce.

Participants heard from three African companies' (Waste Transformation 4 Energy (WT4E) Association, Co-Creation Hub and Crystal River Products) experiences in trading across Africa and perspectives on possibilities in the Finnish market.

The event concluded with an informative Q&A session led by Birgit Nevala,

Director at Finnpartnership and Christopher Palmberg, Head of Developing Market Platform at Business Finland.

Finland is supporting One Trade Africa through ITC's Window 1.

Launching an innovative training series to conquer African regional market

The workshop was organized by ITC's SME Trade Academy and in close collaboration with local trade promotion organizations. At the training, Nigerian stakeholders as well as representatives from Afreximbank made presentations outlining the realities of exporting within the parameters of the AfCFTA.



Over 70 SMEs and the Nigeria Export Promotion Council (NEPC) attended a workshop themed “How to Export with the AfCFTA”. A joint initiative of ITC and the African Export-Import Bank (Afreximbank) the week-long training, held on 16 to 20 August 2021 in Abuja, Nigeria was organized as part of the One Trade Africa programme.

One Trade Africa

“ The “How to Export with AfCFTA” e-learning platform is a product of ITC’s partnership with **Afreximbank**, designed with a focus on **small businesses** but also **women** and **youth**. Immensely popular since the release of its **pilot version** in **Côte d’Ivoire**, **Nigeria**, and **Rwanda** in 2020, the **How to Export with AfCFTA e-learning platform** is readily accessible on the ITC-Afreximbank Academy online platform. **With over 1500 enrolled training participants**, the training will soon be rolled out to all 55 African countries and include versions in Arabic and Portuguese. ”

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Exploring the prospects Africa's youth derives from the AfCFTA

Opportunities for Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship

Understanding the African Continental Free Trade Area



In collaboration with



ITC launched a report on the income generation windfall for African youth titled “Opportunities for Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship: Understanding the African Continental Free Trade Area.” The flagship publication explores the benefits for youth from the creation of a single market and the promotion of key sectors, including manufacturing, agriculture and services.

Although Africa's large and fast-growing youth population is considered one of its greatest assets, the report urged policymakers and development organizations to take steps in ensuring the agreement reaches its full potential. The report underscored the AfCFTA's key role in tackling these challenges by creating more jobs and entrepreneurship opportunities for young men and women.



Unveiling One Trade Africa in Dakar, Senegal

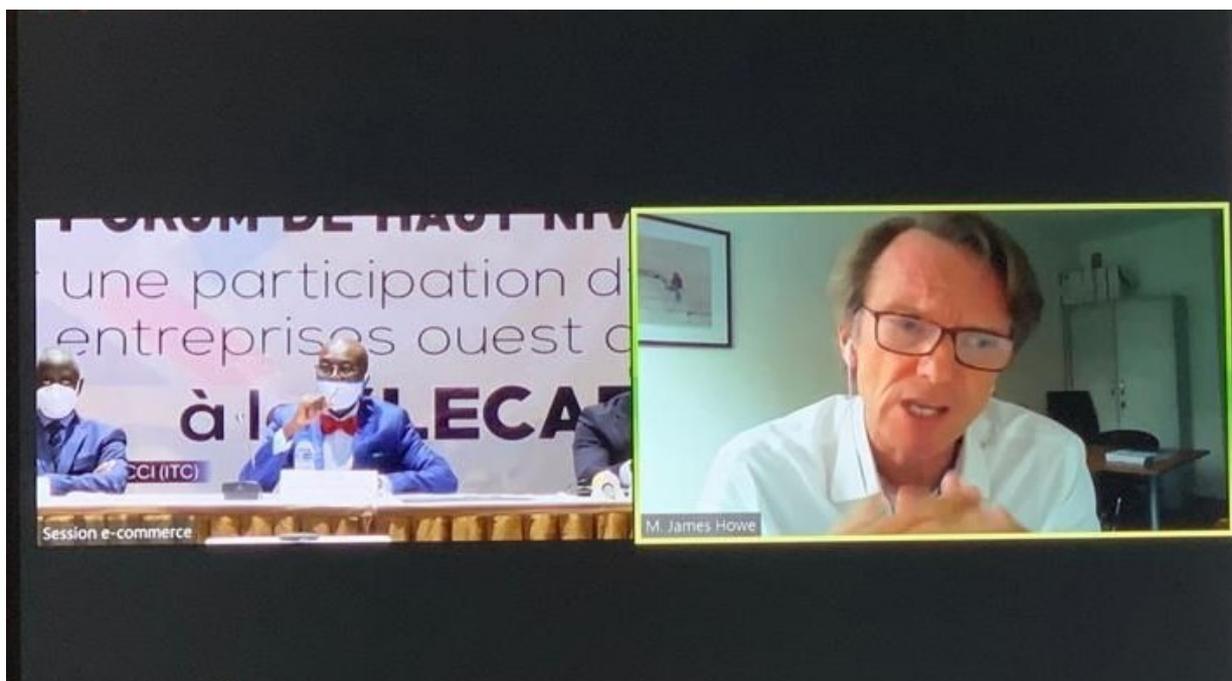


In March 2020, alongside Senegal's Ministry of Trade, Small and Medium Enterprises and the ECOWAS Commission at ITC's AfCFTA Dakar Forum, Deputy Executive Director Dorothy Tembo announced the launch of One Trade Africa. During the forum representatives called for the swift implementation of the AfCFTA to boost Africa's economic opportunities and increase the competitiveness of African MSMEs.

Describing the far-reaching scope of this new initiative, Deputy Executive Director Dorothy Tembo said: "At ITC, it is in our DNA to support MSMEs to become more competitive and connect with market opportunities. This is a collective effort. Our focus on women, youth and marginalized groups is very important if we want the AfCFTA to work for all and meet Agenda 2063 of the AU.

The AfCFTA must be an engine for growth as much as an engine for inclusion. This is also about leaving no one behind and fulfilling the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030."

Attending the session on behalf of Senegal's Ministry of Trade, Small and Medium Enterprises and the ECOWAS Commission were Mr Samba Ndao and Mr Tei Konzi respectively. The Secretary General of the AfCFTA Secretariat, Mr Wamkele Mene as well as the European Union Delegation Team leader, Mr Amaury Hoste were also in attendance.



AfCFTA regional dialogue forum in partnership with OWIT Zimbabwe



At the Harare High-Level Trade Forum on 16 March 2021, ITC urged women entrepreneurs in Southern Africa to expand their business opportunities through the AfCFTA. Organized in collaboration with the Organization of Women in International Trade (OWIT) in Zimbabwe, the event was part of ITC's One Trade Africa (OTA) programme - AfCFTA Dialogue Forums.



Themed 'Trade Beyond COVID-19: Demystifying the AfCFTA for Women-led MSMEs in Zimbabwe and Southern Africa', the event underscored the importance of promoting the ownership of the continental agreement and urged women and youth-owned enterprises to seek out potential business opportunities generated by the new continental trade agreement.



Operationalizing North Africa's trade systems to increase intra-Africa trade



In March 2021, ITC organized the Rabat Forum in partnership with the General Secretariat of the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU), the Government of the Kingdom of Morocco and with the support of the Ministries of Commerce of Egypt and AMU Member States namely Algeria, Libya, Morocco, Mauritania and Tunisia.

During the forum, speakers underscored the need for African regions to maximise benefits for the African private sector especially in the context of the AfCFTA. Representatives also highlighted the need to revitalise the Arab Maghreb Union, harmonise legislation, as well as increase the flow of trade and services between North African countries.

H.E. Moulay Hafid El Alami, Minister of Industry, Trade, Green Economy and Digital Sector of Morocco: "The AfCFTA should scale up the integration of

our respective national markets and the development of continental value chains and stimulate intra-African trade.”

ITC Executive Director Coke-Hamilton: "The operationalisation of the AfCFTA is expected to reshape and transform African countries by accelerating growth, diversifying exports and attracting investment."

ITC Chief Office for Arab States, Lilia Hachem Naas: "The Maghreb integration is a key milestone in the continental integration process and presents enormous opportunities in terms of growth and employment."

Upcoming Events

- **28 February:** Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development 2022
“Towards enhanced partnerships to support an inclusive AfCFTA”
- **7 March:** Dubai Expo 2020 “Making One Trade Africa a reality”
- **Mid-May:** Sierra Leone Trade Roadshow “Attracting intra-African investments and FDIs to increase Sierra Leone’s participation in regional value chains”
- **End May:** AfCFTA Forum in Casablanca “How to export within the AfCFTA”
- **June:** Dakar, Senegal – State of play on investment promotion in Africa under the AfCFTA: The way forward for the African private sector
- **June:** Lusaka, Zambia – AfCFTA National Forum
- **July:** Launch of the EABC Youth in Business Platform

With support from its partners, ITC through One Trade Africa will maximise the benefits of the regional integration for African businesses especially within the context of the AfCFTA. One Trade Africa will continue to work alongside various partners including: Member States, AUC/ ETIM, AfCFTA Secretariat, AU-NEPAD, regional economic communities, United Nations agencies (UNECA, UNCTAD, UNDP, UNIDO) and regional banks such as the African Export and Import Bank and the African Development Bank, think-thanks and the civil society.

To learn more about the One Trade Africa Programme visit:

[One Trade Africa](#)



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