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The
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Group



CONCEPT NOTE

The Inaugural Africa Job creation Forum (2023)

Theme of the Job creation Forum

”Accelerating Job Creation, Digital and Financial Inclusion in the AfCFTA market”

DATE: 7-9 JULY 2023

VENUE: ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

Side Event by the AeTrade Group, OECD Development Centre and African Union Commission

- ❖ Launching the Smart Finance and Digital Bank and the Inclusive Interoperable Payment System for Africa in order to implement Executive Council Decision of February 2022.



CONCEPT NOTE

1. BACKGROUND

1. Africa's integration Agenda is enshrined in the Abuja Treaty (1991), and has an overarching goal of achieving an African Economic Community at continental level, in six successive stages, which include the strengthening of sectoral cooperation and the creation of regional free trade areas, establishment of a continental Customs Union, a Common Market and a monetary and economic union. It is understood that consolidation of the Common Market will hinge free movement of people, right of residence and right of establishment.
2. A historic milestone for regional integration in Africa was recorded on 1 January 2021 with the start of trading under the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). The remarkable speed of negotiations, signature, ratifications and entry into force of the AfCFTA Agreement took place between June 2015 and May 2019 and is unprecedented in the treaty making history of the AU just behind the Constitutive Act of the Union.
3. It is in this vein, that during their 12th Extraordinary Summit on the launch of the operational phase of the AfCFTA in Niamey, Niger on 7 July 2019, AU Heads of State and Government decided that 7 July of each year be designated as "the African Integration Day" to celebrate major achievements attained in regional and continental integration process, and also to deliberate on critical lessons learned, with a view of addressing challenges faced. The first commemoration of African Integration Day took place from 12 June to 9 July 2020.
4. The mobilisation and enthusiasm observed during the first commemoration of the Africa Integration Day in 2020, 2021 and 2022 is a clear testimony of the importance that the African Union leadership attaches to faster regional and continental integration as embedded in the Abuja Treaty. To date 45 countries have deposited their instruments of ratification and the number is growing. A number of countries have prepared their AfCFTA Implementation Strategies and the Guided Trade Initiatives in Goods and Services is underway.
5. There is a growing community of businesses, women and youth led that are keen to participate in the AfCFTA process. The Guided Trade Initiative has demonstrated that Africans are ready to trade under the AfCFTA rules and they need more support to be able to do so in large numbers. This is why enabling tools and mechanisms are critical to the acceleration of intra-African trade, which is why it is necessary to become concrete and provide specific tools that can be used to participate meaningfully in the AfCFTA.
6. The AUC, OECD and the AeTrade Group will also officially unveil products and services under the Smart Finance and Digital Banking Initiative endorsed by the Assembly of Heads

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of State and Government in February 2022. This commemoration will provide a platform that ensure broad participation of all actors at the national, regional and continental levels, including Member States, RECs, the African Diaspora, Development Partners, Academia, Private Sector, Civil Society, Women and Youth to put a spotlight on the AU Theme of the Year on accelerating the implementation of the AfCFTA.

7. Despite the adoption and implementation of the AfCFTA, the results in attaining the objectives of the Abuja Treaty remain rather mixed with the RECs at different stages of implementation of the Treaty. In addition, more effort is needed to make the ordinary African Citizens understand and own the regional integration process. This is the reason why the AU Heads of State and Government have dedicated this year to the theme of “Accelerated Implementation of the AfCFTA” and the AfCFTA Secretariat has prepared a RoadMap of Activities for the Year. This event shall be included within the calendar as a contribution to the series of events to sensitize and promote the AfCFTA.

B. BACKGROUND

8. The overall objective of the commemoration is to deliberate on how to use integration including the AfCFTA as a tool for the continent’s economic recovery due to the multiple crises and shocks due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the war in Russian and Ukraine and its impact on the global economy as well as the challenges due to climate change inter alia. The African continent faces a more immediate threat, and this is due to the rising unemployment, especially for the 18 million youth that enter the job market every year who are unable to find jobs. It is therefore imperative for the AfCFTA implementation to specifically focus on the creation of jobs in order to drive shared prosperity across the continent. The AeTrade Group, a diaspora led initiative, has a target for Africa to generate between 80-125 million jobs in the next 15 years and thus eradicate extreme poverty. It is timely to mobilise all Africans to engage and agree on this target as well as to commit to specific actions to drive the job creation agenda within the context of the AfCFTA implementation.

9. During the launch of the operational phase of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) in Niamey, Niger on 7 July 2019, the African Union (AU) Heads of State and Government decided that ‘7 July of each year be designated as *“the Africa Integration Day”* without it being a holiday, to commemorate the operationalisation of the AfCFTA Agreement and to popularise economic integration across the Continent as a lever of inclusive sustainable development’.

10. The 33rd Ordinary Session of the Summit of AU Heads of States and Government held on 9 and 10 February 2020 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, called upon Member States to come up with commemorative activities to observe and celebrate the achievements of the

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AfCFTA in the preceding year. The Summit also adopted the Guidelines for the commemoration of Africa Integration Day with sample commemorative activities.

11. During the 2020 edition the AeTrade Group unveiled the Sokokuu Plan African E-commerce Platform and the Global Competition for Youth Start Ups. In 2021 it unveiled a series of partnerships and the announcement of the host country for East Africa and the continental headquarters. This year the objective is to unveil the digital banking and smart finance tools.

12. The Government of Ethiopia, as the champion for the Africa Jobs creation Forum it is working with the AeTrade Group as the technical secretariat for the Africa Jobs creation Forum with the endorsement of the key partners. The Africa Job creation Forum shall be an annual event, taking place in Addis Ababa during the Africa Integration Week and in-between the creation Forum, the AeTrade Group and all the partners will be working on implementing job creation initiatives and they will report progress on the targets set on an annual basis to all the leaders and the citizens of the continent.

13. The African private sector is a critical partner for the success of the Job Creation agenda in Africa. The private sector shall be the key actors in pledging to accelerate AfCFTA implementation and creating decent jobs. The platform will give priority to private sector led job creation strategies and will be aligned to the AfCFTA Private Sector Strategy. Private Sector Champions for Jobs will emerge during the process, based on their impact on the ground, and there should be a Forum to recognize these contributions at future Africa Jobs creation Forum events.

14. The Development Finance Institutions including the African Development Bank shall be invited to become anchor partners in the inaugural event as well as throughout the year through its programming across the continent. Specific programmes addressing gender and employment as well as SMEs, women and youth shall be featured during the event.

15. The United Nations family including ILO, UNDP, UNECA and many others are strategic partners of the Africa Jobs creation Forum. Therefore, the co-organisers will have the support of these institutions as well as other multilateral institutions around the world that are supporting the goal of creating millions of decent jobs. These institutions will be instrumental in providing support on the monitoring and evaluation of the progress made on job creation from year to year. A methodology shall be agreed by the African Union, and AU Member States on how to measure the impact of the Job Creation Drive across the continent in line with Agenda 2063 and Agenda 2030. Annual reports should be produced as national, regional and continental levels highlighting successes and challenges in order to enable stakeholders to make continuous improvements in this area.

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C. OBJECTIVES



16.. The main objective of hosting this platform is to accelerate the implementation of the AfCFTA through innovations for promoting value addition and industrialization and job creation on the continent.

16.1. The specific objectives of the event are:

16.1.1 To connect various players of the African innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem including exhibitions of innovative products and service including the Sokokuu Platform and related initiatives.

16.1.2 To create synergies that will pave the way for the African innovation ecosystem to thrive which will in turn create a significant number of jobs in Africa.

16.1.3 To discuss relevant policies and practical challenges and opportunities for accelerating job creation in Africa. This will enable participants to exchange good practices and experiences, which can be replicated or adapted to other circumstances.

16.1.4 To chart practical solutions in collaboration with policy makers for youth access entrepreneurship opportunities as well as employment.

16.1.5 To establish partnerships and cooperation between Africa and other region's start-ups, and other stakeholders, such as international organizations, incubation hubs, academia, financiers and investors.

16.1.6 To provide relevant information and cultural entertainment in the Africa Jobs creation Forum as well as showcasing creative industries such as fashion, arts and digital technologies as part of job creation.

17 The event shall be organized in such as manner as to;

- a provide a platform where the main players, including RECs, policymakers, private sector, civil society, will openly discuss the challenges facing regional and continental integration, with a view to providing practical solutions to overcome them;
- b foster citizens' participation with a view of instilling an unwavering commitment to regional integration, job creation and innovation in Africa;

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- c create a new positive mind-set on the importance of integration as a tool to accelerate job creation and economic recovery from COVID-19 pandemic for those living in the continent and in the diaspora;
- d celebrate the progress made in the implementation of the African Integration Agenda including, the launch of the AfCFTA and its implementation;
- e reflect and share lessons learned, with a view to accelerate decent job creation
- f gather opinions from all relevant stakeholders in the formulation and implementation of key strategies for enhancing the coordination of regional and continental integration projects;
- g enhance the realization of a faster Africa integration process and agenda with a view to achieving Africa's structural transformation for inclusive and sustainable economic development as outlined in "*Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want*";
- h Enable the African Continental Free Trade Area Secretariat and other African Union organs to communicate their integration and job creation projects and programmes through exhibition stands and strengthen mechanism to enhance dialogue with African citizens on matters regarding the AfCFTA and job opportunities , as well as explore opportunities for cooperation with relevant stakeholders for faster realization of the 80-125 million job creation target;
- i sensitise the people on the benefits of integration as well as on the Status of Regional and Continental Integration; and
- j Identify key challenges facing African citizens in the job creation process as well as necessary measures to address them for their benefit.

By encouraging and facilitating partnerships and collaboration between key players in the public and private sectors, with a focus on MSMEs, women and youth enterprises, the goals of job creation and boosting inter- and intra- African trade and growth progression are becoming a reality.

D. PARTICIPATION – PHYSICAL AND VIRTUAL

The African Union Commission (AUC), the Government of Ethiopia and the AeTrade Group shall host the first ever Africa Jobs creation Forum (from 7th to 9th July 2023 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The Africa Jobs creation Forum shall be catering for 10,000 in person participants from across the continent and can be broadcasted up to 200 million the citizen of Africa though the national media channels. Furthermore, the event plans to host the largest continental Africa Integration Day event, which shall attract the national and international media to broadcast the events taking place within the Job creation Forum. The African Union Commission will invite all AU Member States to send national media representatives to Addis Ababa in order to broadcast the proceedings through multiple channels in local languages with the aim to reach 200 million citizens on the 7th July 2023 alone. This will be an important

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milestone to popularize the citizens and thereby built trust in the processes that are undertaken by the African Union to promote integration and AfCFTA participation. In order to make the event attractive to the ordinary citizens, it shall be a combination of information sharing, dialogue between different stakeholders, showcasing innovations as well as African creativity through music, art, fashion and other means. The involvement of key influencers will be critical in order to driven the excitement of “Made in Africa” products and services, which will be the engine of the single market.

TARGETED PARTICIPANTS

- Heads of State and Government
- Ministers for Gender, Youth and Integration
- Ministers of Finance and Central Bank Governors
- Private Sector
- SMEs supporting organizations
- Civil Society organizations especially for Women and Youth
- Development Partners
- Media

SELECTION CRITERIA

All AU member states will be invited to participate. The focus should be on enabling the participation of the private sector, civil society and various groups that are involved in job creation efforts at national, regional or continental level.

INVITATION PROCESS

A Note Verbale will be sent through the African Union processes in order to facilitate the participation of all AU Member States. The co-organizers shall also develop a list of participants that will be invited as speakers or moderators of the sessions that will be included in the final programme.

E. CONFERENCE PROGRAMME AND FORMAT

18. To be developed and approved by the co-organisers based on a physical and virtual format. The programme for the event shall be approved by the co-organisers.

PUBLIC PRIVATE DIALOGUE



- ❖ INTERGENERATIONAL
- ❖ EXHIBITION
- ❖ SHOWCASE
- ❖ AWARDS

DIALOGUE

19. EXHIBITION SPACE

The African Integration Week shall have an exhibition to showcase examples of interventions that create jobs on a large scale. All partners who make a financial contribution to the Africa Integration Week and the Job creation Forum shall be designated a limited space to promote their products and services. All AU organs, Regional Economic Communities and specialized agencies will have priority to display their job creation initiatives for the public. It will be an Open Day for ordinary citizens to be informed about the AU's activities.

20. EVENT ORGANISER

The AeTrade Group shall designate a professional team to manage the preparation and execution of the branding, communications and logistical arrangements.

21. BREAKDOWN OF TASKS

21.1 Concept note, programme and budget finalized by 31st March 2023

21.2 Marketing Materials designed (Brochures, flyers, banners) (AeTrade) by mid-April 2023

21.3 Sponsorship Packages completed and distributed (AeTrade,) by mid-April 2023

21.4 Confirm the venue and the Note Verbale to be sent to all AU Member States (AUC, May 2023

21.5 Promotional event with the PRC, UN and Diplomatic Corps in Addis Ababa – May 29, 2023

21.6 Confirmation of Speakers for the Conference Segment –30 June 2023

21.7 Promotion on Digital Media (AeTrade Group, Event Manager) - ongoing

F. EXPECTED OUTCOMES

22.1. Consensus on the principles behind job creation policy mix including some recommendations

22.2. Collaboration relationships for problem solving of emergent issues including the green economy and opportunities for job creation.

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22.3. Increased cooperation and collaboration among innovators, development partners, public and private sectors and other stakeholders on the continent and beyond in solving the complex challenge of job creation.

22.4. It will also provide a platform for establishment of partnerships and cooperation for job creation.

22.5 A monitoring platform for jobs across the continent to be developed.

23. CONTACT PERSONS

The contact persons for the co-organizers are listed below:

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