



DIRECTORATE OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION

MEDIA ADVISORY/ N°

AFRICA TRADE WEEK 2016 (ATW2016)

Theme: “Advancing Socio-Economic Structural Transformation through Intra-Africa Trade”

INVITATION TO REPRESENTATIVES OF THE MEDIA

When: Monday 28 November – Friday 2 December 2016

Where: AU Headquarters, Addis-Ababa, Ethiopia

Who: Organised by the Department of Trade and Industry in collaboration with the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA)

Objective: The ATW2016 will focus on the Continental Free Trade Area (CFTA), with emphasis on Trade Facilitation, implementation as well as building Productive Capacities for Industrialisation. The main objective of ATW2016 is to provide a comprehensive, integrated and inclusive platform for policy dialogue between various Trade Constituencies.

The specific objectives of ATW2016 are to:

- Enable High-Level exchange of views between African countries, Regional Economic Communities and their International Partners on how African countries can foster Economic Integration that nurtures Social and Economic Structural Transformation as mandated by Agenda 2063.
- Facilitate a platform for RECs, Member States and other Stakeholders to exchange views on how to prioritize the CFTA as part of a coherent and consistent package that encompasses the Multilateral and Bilateral Trade Agenda as well as Share Experience for Cross-fertilization on the CFTA Negotiations and its effective implementation.
- Provide a platform for African Trade Stakeholders to define their contribution to the CFTA as well as reflect on how their existing Trade Capacity Building Programs can be mobilized in support of the CFTA Initiative.

Participants: ATW2016 will be attended by Representatives from key Trade Constituencies in Africa and from around the world. These will include Policymakers, High-Level Government Officials, Private Sector Operators, Civil Society, Parliamentarians, Development Partners,

Academics, Researchers, Regional Economic Communities (RECs), Corridor Management Institutions and the Media.

Format: ATW2016 will have three main segments. **The First component** — the Africa Trade Forum (ATF) - Running from November 28 to 30, will focus on the Continental Free Trade Area (CFTA) and its implementation as the main theme. The ATF will encompass a combination of plenary, breakout sessions and side events on other African trade priorities. Each plenary Session will be facilitated by a Moderator, will have Keynote Speakers, followed by a High-Level panel discussion by renowned Practitioners and/or Experts. Opportunities will be available for participants to field questions. **The Second segment** of ATW2016 will be a meeting of African Ministers of Trade on November 29-30. This segment is specifically for invited delegations only and will include a Session for Dialogue between Stakeholders and Ministers. **The Third segment** is the 2nd African Trade Facilitation Forum (ATTF). The ATTF will take place from December 1-2 and will consist of a High-Level Policy Dialogue on the implementation of the Trade Facilitation Cluster of BIAT, including the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA).

Background: The African Union (AU) has articulated, through Agenda 2063, a long-term framework for enhancing “an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the international arena.” The Continental Free Trade Area (CFTA) was identified therein as the pillar for “accelerating progress towards continental unity and integration for sustained growth, trade, goods exchanges, services, free movement of people and capital.” In September 2015, the United Nations (UN) launched a new development compact, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), with specific targets for eliminating extreme poverty. The SDG targets are aligned with Agenda 2063 through the Common African Position (CAP) an initiative adopted by AU Heads of State and Government in 2014 as a “Collective African Voice” to inform the SDGs development process. Similarly, African Ministers of Finance and Economy in March 2016, called for an integrated approach African Trade Week 2016 The Continental Free Trade Area and Trade Facilitation (November 28 – December 2, 2016) Information NOTE 2 to the AU and SDG agendas monitored through one consolidated result framework. There is now a consensus among African countries and the international community to use trade as a tool for economic transformation and poverty eradication

The African trade agenda is at a critical junction. All African sub-regions have engaged in negotiations for the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPA) with the European Union. On June 24, 2016, the United Kingdom, a major trading partner for several of these EPAs sub-regions, voted to separate from the European single market. This development adds a significant complication to the African trade agenda. Furthermore, discussions are scheduled to begin next year on the post-2020 relation between the European Union and the Group of African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries. The United States of America, in September 2015, extended the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) for 10 years during which reciprocal trade agreements will have to be negotiated. Other major African trading partners such as Japan, India, China and Brazil are contemplating enhanced trade and investment ties with the continent. Moreover, the WTO ministerial in Kenya concluded in December 2015 with a symbolic face saving small package. This is the continuation of a process that has slowly undermined the development agenda that Africa had painfully and successfully inserted in the Doha Development Agenda (DDA). Finally, burgeoning mega-regional trade negotiations between the African region and major global trading partners is expected to significantly impact the African Trade Agenda.

Trade facilitation is vital to the region. Adopting the Trade Facilitation (TF) agreement in Bali in 2013 has had considerable consequences for African countries. Trade facilitation is projected to

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boost intra-African trade by between 10 and 16 per cent. Analytical studies indicate that the creation of the CFTA accompanied by more efficient customs procedures and reduction in delays at African ports can more than double intra-African trade within a decade. Likewise, implementing trade facilitation measures in coastal and transit countries can have positive spill over effects on hinterland countries. The positive externalities Trade Facilitation reforms and investments produces need to be viewed as a regional public good.

The Agenda 2063 10-year Implementation Plan amongst other important priorities for the continent includes several flagship projects. The CFTA is one of these projects as defined in AU Assembly Decision 394 of January 2012, on Boosting Intra-African Trade (BIAT) and fast tracking the establishment of the CFTA. Through the CFTA, intra-African trade is expected to double between 2012 and 2022, intra-African agricultural trade to triple by 2025 (Malabo Declaration of June 2014).

Journalists are invited to cover the Official Opening and Closing Sessions of the Africa Trade Week 2016. They are also invited to cover all Open Sessions of the ATW2016.

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