

DIRECTORATE OF INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION

Media Advisory

Date: 28th December, 2020

Venue: Ghana, Accra

What: **The AfCFTA Start of Trading Ceremony Webinar**

When: 1st January, 2021

Time: 11:00 – 12:00h GMT

Who: The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Secretariat

Register for the webinar here <https://bit.ly/2WMQELQ>

Keynote Speakers

- Mr. Cyril Ramaphosa President of the Republic of South Africa and current Chairperson of the African Union
- H.E. Mr. Mahamadou Issoufou President of Niger and AU Champion of the AfCFTA
- H.E. Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat the Chairperson of the African Union Commission
- H.E. Mr. Wamkele Mene the Secretary General of the AfCFTA.

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The AfCFTA Start of Trading webinar is being organised to celebrate a moment in Africa's history where a great stride in continental integration is being witnessed. The webinar will be the first of a series of events that will take place virtually and physically over the next few weeks to mark this important occasion in Africa's fulfilment of the Organisation for African Unity (OAU) founding fathers' dream of a truly united and integrated continent.

Background Information

On 1st January 2021 trading under the AfCFTA will start in Africa. This is a historic milestone for the continent as Africa will really start to trade with Africa. To mark the occasion, a lunch time ceremony including speeches by some African Union Heads of State and Government, representatives of development partners and the private sector as well as showing of videos on different aspects of trade and development in Africa is being organised by the AfCFTA Secretariat. African citizens from all over the continent are invited to witness this historic and important event on New Year's Day 2021.

Currently, the percentage of trade that African countries do with each other is a mere 16 - 18%. The bulk of the continent's trade is with the rest of the world, and most African exports are in raw materials including extractive commodities like oil, gas and minerals which are vulnerable to market volatility.

Under AfCFTA trading, tariffs on various commodities where rules of origin have been agreed will be drastically reduced and traders of all sizes will have access to a much bigger market than they used to before. Non-tariff barriers (NTBs) to trade will also be addressed and a mechanism for speedy reporting and resolution of NTBs has been put in place (www.tradebarriers.africa). The bigger market will spur producers to upscale and so support increased industrialization and value addition on the continent. More employment opportunities will thus be generated for Africa's burgeoning youth population.

It has already been demonstrated that to mitigate the Covid-19 pandemic medicines and personal protective equipment need to be produced and moved to where they are needed expeditiously. The AfCFTA will be a tool for mitigation of Covid-19 by allowing free and unhindered trade in health products across the continent.

Note to editors

The Agreement establishing the AfCFTA was signed in March 2018, in Kigali Rwanda, following conclusion of the main legal texts. 54 Member States of the African Union have signed, and 30 countries have deposited their instruments of ratification with the Chairperson of the African Union Commission. The main objectives of the AfCFTA are to create a single market for goods and services, facilitate the movement of persons, promote industrial development and sustainable and inclusive socio-economic growth, and resolve the issue of multiple membership, in accordance with agenda 2063. It lays a foundation for the establishment, in future, of a [Continental Common Market](#).

For more information on the AfCFTA Start of Trading webinar please contact
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