

The African Union: Shaping Africa's Trade Future at Intra-African Trade Fair (IATF2023)

The Third Intra-African Trade Fair (IATF2023) organized by the African Export-Import Bank (Afreximbank) in collaboration with the African Union (AU) and the Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Secretariat, will take place in Cairo, Egypt from 9th - 15th November, 2023. Under the theme **The AfCFTA Marketplace**.

IATF2023 will provide a unique and valuable platform for businesses to access an integrated African market of over 1.3 billion people with a GDP of over US\$3.5 trillion created under the African Continental Free Trade Area.

Why the Intra-African Trade Fair (IATF2023) is important:

1. **Promoting Intra-African Trade:** The IATF plays a crucial role in boosting trade among African countries. Intra-African trade is generally lower compared to other regions, and the fair aims to address this by creating a conducive environment for African businesses to trade with each other.
2. **Market Access:** It provides African businesses with access to a larger market within the continent. This enables companies to expand their customer base and increase sales, ultimately contributing to economic growth.
3. **Facilitating Networking:** The fair brings together a diverse range of businesses, government officials, investors, and trade experts. This facilitates networking and partnerships that can lead to collaborations and business growth.
4. **Showcasing African Products and Services:** African businesses have the opportunity to showcase their products and services to a wider audience. This not only helps in building brand recognition but also highlights the quality and diversity of goods and services produced on the continent.
5. **Attracting Investment:** The IATF attracts domestic and foreign investors interested in African markets. This can lead to increased foreign direct investment (FDI), which can fuel economic development and job creation.

IATF 2023 Program of Events

The Intra-African Trade Fair (IATF) 2023 would be an exciting and impactful program of events designed to facilitate trade, foster collaboration, and promote economic growth within the African continent. These programs highlight and offer diverse opportunities for businesses, entrepreneurs, and creative professionals to engage, network, and explore trade and investment prospects at IATF2023.

1. Trade Exhibition

- Countries, large corporations, and Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) can set up pavilions and exhibition stand's tailored to their unique requirements. This provides opportunities for private and public entities to showcase their goods and services.

2. Trade and Investment Forum

- A four-day conference featuring leading African and international speakers with sessions addressing African trade and investment issues. The conference covers trade and investment opportunities under the AfCFTA and includes training workshops on exporting, standards, and marketing.

3. Creative Africa Nexus (CANEX)

- A platform showcasing Africa's creative economy in fashion, music, film, arts and craft, sports, gastronomy, and culinary arts. The CANEX Programme includes a Creative Africa Summit and a dedicated Creative Industry Exhibition.

4. B2B and B2G Platform

- This platform facilitates matchmaking, business exchanges, and the conclusion of business and investment deals. It is supported by a dedicated African & Hosted Buyers' Programme.

5. Country Days

- A segment open to four countries for showcasing trade, investment, tourism, and cultural opportunities. The first slot is reserved for the Host Country (Egypt).

6. IATF Virtual

- An interactive online platform showcasing goods, services, and investment opportunities. The IATF Virtual is live and continues even after the physical Trade Fair has ended.

7. Africa Automotive Show

- A platform for auto manufacturers, assemblers, OEMs, and component suppliers to exhibit their products and engage with potential buyers and suppliers. It includes an Auto Forum, Autoshow, and B2B and B2G exchanges.

8. AU Youth Start-Up Programme

- Featuring a dedicated Pavilion for Youth-Led Start-Ups in Africa where they showcase innovative ideas, prototypes, goods, and services. The IATF provides opportunities for matchmaking with venture capitalists, entrepreneurship training, and networking.

9. Diaspora Day

- IATF2023 Diaspora Day highlights commercial and cultural ties between Africa and its diaspora. It includes a Diaspora Summit, market and exhibition, and a cultural and gastronomic showcase.

The Africa Union activities at the IATF

The African Union (AU) will be actively involved in the Intra-African Trade Fair (IATF) 2023, contributing to the event's success and regional economic integration.

1. The AU's involvement in the IATF 2023 highlights its commitment to promoting economic cooperation and integration among African nations.

2. By actively participating in the trade fair, the AU aims to showcase Africa's potential as a hub for intra-African trade and attract investments from both within and outside the continent.

3. The AU's involvement in the IATF 2023 also signifies its recognition of the importance of regional economic integration in boosting Africa's overall trade performance and fostering sustainable development across the continent.
4. Through its participation, the AU can leverage its influence to facilitate discussions and negotiations on key trade, Industry, tourism and minerals issues.

The AU's activities at IATF include:

African Union Pavilion – Egypt International Exhibition Centre and Al Manara International Conference Centre

IATF Side Events

- Africa Industrialization Week (AIW), 13 to 15 November 2023 - [AIW 2023](#):
20th of November was proclaimed Africa Industrialization Day by the 25th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in 1989. The same date was set aside annually as Africa Industrialization Day by the General Assembly of the United Nations (UNGA) in 1989. The commemoration has been done each year by the African Union Commission, the Member States, and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO). Since 2018, Africa Industrialization Day is commemorated with a prelude of weeklong events known as “Africa Industrialization Week” (AIW).

- Enterprise Africa Network (EAN), 14 November 2023 [EAN](#):

Enterprise Africa Network (EAN) is one of the initiatives under the African Union SME Strategy, which was endorsed by the Heads of State and Government. This is an Apex body that will provide the necessary information on funding and market access as well as capacity-building for MSME/Is on the continent.

The EAN will onboard different stakeholders who are involved in the MSME Development landscape, financial institutions domiciled in the continent will also be accorded the opportunity to offer financial support to MSMEs in the continent through the platform.

- African Women in Processing (AWIP), 9 to 15 November 2023- [AWIP](#)

The African Union Assembly decided to hold the African Women in Processing (AWIP) Summit annually during Africa Industrialization Week (AIW). The summit aims to address gender gaps in the manufacturing sector by providing a platform for African women to exchange experiences, access new opportunities, and establish partnerships. It supports the African Union's industrialization agenda and Agenda 2063 by catalyzing the transformation of industrial processing led by women. AWIP addresses structural norms and sets a new policy direction for women to take advantage of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

- High Level Dialogue on the AU Commodity Strategy - [High Level Dialogue on Commodity](#)

The African Union Commodity Strategy which presents an opportunity for the continent to transition away from its historic role as a commodity exporter towards higher productivity value addition. The Strategy and its Action Plan was adopted by the Executive Council of the African Union through Decision EX.CL/Dec.1144(XL) in February 2022. The strategy envisioned transforming Africa from simply being a raw materials supplier for the rest of the world to a continent that actively uses its resources to ensure the economic development of African citizens and efficient supply of raw materials as well as intermediate and finished products under the AfCFTA. The African Union will convene a high-level dialogue focusing on the four key strategic pillars that were identified to guide the optimal use of African commodities to achieve sustainable industrialization, economic diversification, structural transformation, development, and enhanced trade. The event will be attended by relevant AU organs, RMs and agencies, RECs, Regional Business Councils, Government Officials from the Member States, African financial institutions, and strategic partners of the African Union.

- IATF Media breakfast - [IATF Media breakfast](#)

To ensure the media are accorded an engagement platform, the African Union Commission Department of Economic Development, Tourism, Trade, Industry, Mining (ETTİM) together with the Information and Communication Directorate, will convene a Media Breakfast Roundtable at IATF2023 to update and engage the media on ongoing key activities by the African Union. The roundtable will be an opportunity for the media to receive accurate and up-to-date information, on among other topical areas, trade, economic and integration matters; the second 10-year implementation plan of Agenda 2063, and other African Union flagship projects.

- Pan African Quality Infrastructure - [PAQI](#)