



PAFOM 2023
PAN-AFRICAN FORUM ON MIGRATION

The logo for the Pan-African Forum on Migration (PAFOM) 2023. It features a stylized map of Africa on the left, composed of green and yellow geometric shapes. To the right, the acronym "PAFOM" is written in large, bold, black letters. The year "2023" is written vertically to the right of "PAFOM". Below "PAFOM" is the full name "PAN-AFRICAN FORUM ON MIGRATION".

Commission 3

Facilitating Trade, Mobility and Regional Integration Through Public-Private Sector Engagement and Use of Technology and Innovation.



I – Background:

The AfCFTA is a treaty “to create a single market for goods and services” in the continent that came into force on 30 May 2019 with a protocol on trade in goods in place. Protocols on investment, trade in services, competition and intellectual property rights are being negotiated and will become integral parts of the agreement. The protocols being negotiated are an opportunity to alter the terms on which Africa engages in the global digital economy.

While the lack of access to networked digital technologies threatens to exacerbate existing inequalities, the delay in access becoming widely available for most Africans may present an opportunity. There is still a chance to embed digital technologies in African economies so that the technologies benefit the most marginalized people. This chance to deploy policies on digital technologies so that they reduce rather than increase inequality is an opportunity for a digital new deal. RIA coined the term “digital new deal” to refer to experimental policy intervention in the globalized processes of digitalization and datafication required to redress the currently uneven distribution of opportunities and harms arising from them.

A key issue is control over the flow of data that is a new factor of production in digital economies. A continent-wide trade agreement provides an opportunity to ensure that data flow benefits the majority of Africans. Competition and e-commerce regulation must enable data flow so that data is used to increase efficiency. But how will the benefits of data use be more equitably distributed? An important factor in who

gets to benefit are intellectual property rules. Since intellectual property rules tend to centralize control over data, they must be rebalanced so that these rules do not contribute to unequal distribution of the benefits of data.

The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) provides policymakers an opportunity to create a digital new deal for Africans. Furthermore, inclusion in the digital economy is important to continental coordination – and to the AfCFTA – for multiple reasons.

The size of digital markets in Africa are relatively small even in countries with active tech sectors such as Kenya, Nigeria and South Africa. A single African digital market, as proposed in the African Union’s Digital Transformation Strategy, will create a far more viable market for new entrants. It is thus an opportunity to rethink innovation policy so that the market is open to many more entrants. As existing international legal instruments constrain the policy space for national governments, the AfCFTA protocol could either open that policy space or constrain it further.

The substantive participation of the private sector in driving Africa’s development and wealth, calls for a stronger Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) approach between the governments and private firms. Considering the significant challenges of unemployment especially among the youth, that afflicts Africa, given her young population, the private sector can be part of the solution. The private sector can be a key contributor in the establishment of more industries that can contribute significantly to the reduction of youth unemployment.

PPPs will facilitate the inclusion of the private sector in the policy process and propel the growth of the economy of the continent that will lead to more jobs for the unemployed majority youth who, according to the United Nations account for 60 percent of Africa's jobless. Most importantly, PPPs will advance the industrialization agenda which is crucial for Africa's realization of both Agenda 2030 and 2063 respectively.

The private sector is recognized as an indispensable stakeholder in the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA), especially given its ability to catalyze sustainable economic development and job creation. The role of the private sector in the implementation and full exploitation of the AfCFTA cannot be overemphasized.

The AfCFTA is expected to integrate and consolidate Africa into a single \$2.7 trillion market by eliminating many of the barriers to trade present across the Continent. It provides the platform for Africa to diversify its economy and achieve resilience to natural and manmade shocks, including climate change.

For Africa's industries to reap from the operationalization of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) that has been operational from January 2021, the public and private sectors must work together. As noted by UNECA, AfCFTA will cover a GDP of USD 2.5 trillion of the market. However, if the African governments do not work hand in hand with the private sector in building industries that will take advantage of intra-African trade and further encourage the production of more industrial products, the mega-market opportunity presented by AfCFTA will be in vain.

Therefore, as we are keen to enjoy the fruits of AfCFTA, its role in the future of industrialized Africa will depend on how the public sector engages and embrace its private sector as a partner and not a competitor in promoting development. The involvement of governments in particular relationships must be redefined for PPPs to come full circle. The predicted evolution would prevent African governments from acting as both managers and financial sponsors, a move that should benefit the public at large.

Finally, ensuring the good functioning of Africa's Chambers of Commerce which has the power to establish conducive channels in which the interest of the private sector is kept and addressed will play a vital role in accelerating PPPs. The private sector engagement will help to expand Africa's service economy to meet our industrialization agenda needs.

II - Objectives of the Commission:

Within the context of the Conference on Bolstering Free Movement and Trade Nexus in AfCFTA: Optimizing Benefits of Migration, Labour Migration and Development, organized under the 8th Pan African Forum on Migration (PAFoM- 8), the panelists will discuss:

01

Measures that promote the benefits of the AfCFTA among the private sector; suitable trade policies and regulations to make the AfCFTA work for the African business community; and steps to increase intra-African trade. They will also explore ways to boost the participation of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), women and young entrepreneurs in the new single market to facilitate growth and enhance job creation.

02

The initiatives governments need to put in place to enhance the continent's infrastructure so to enable efficient management of transportation of goods and services across the continent. This includes technology interface platforms suitable for the marketing of goods and services, and the management of financial and banking solutions between Africa's exporters and importers. This includes export safety management systems and tracking applications during the transportation of goods and rendering of services.

III - Proposed structure of the Commission

The session will feature a panel discussion with a lead discussant from Business Botswana. His presentation will be followed by interventions from several discussants and a Q&A session with the participants. The proposed structure is as follows:

Moderator: Amadou Cisse, Interim Executive Officer – African Institute for Remittances (AIR)

Lead discussant: Norman Moleele, CEO Business Botswana

Discussants:

- *Ms. Eiman Kheir, Diaspora Policy Manager META*
- *MS Representative*
- *South Africa*
- *Togo*
- *AFCFTA Secretariat representative*
- *Mr. Keletsositse Olebile- Chief Executive Officer BITC Botswana*
- *AUC ETTIM*
- *Barbara Banda - National Association of Businesswomen*
- *Central Bank of Lesotho*



THE 8TH PAN-AFRICAN FORUM ON MIGRATION
31 OCTOBER - 2 NOVEMBER 2023
GABORONE, BOTSWANA

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH





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