

JOINT PRESS RELEASE

African Union Commission and African E-Trade Group unleash the power of e-commerce in Africa



Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 19 October 2018 – A landmark memorandum of partnership was signed today at the Headquarters of the African Union Commission between the AUC, represented by the Commissioner for Trade and Industry, and the A-eTrade Group, represented by its CEO and Board Chairman, with the objective to boost intra African Trade using primarily, new information and communication technologies. The MoU was signed in the presence of H.E. Hailemariam Desalegn, former Prime Minister of the Federal Republic of Ethiopia.

According to the Memorandum, the two entities will work together to foster Public-Private-Partnership in developing and implementing a continental e-Commerce platform and associated services. The two sides will leverage each other's resources and facilities to promote small and medium size enterprises (SMEs) that create jobs and more inclusive and sustainable economic growth across the continent.

The recently launched African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) has the advantage and the potential of being one of the biggest markets. The Memorandum signed today paves the way to bring added value to this market by unleashing latest and tailored technologies that enable digital trade and economy to flourish at local, regional and continental levels. There is a growing excellence and innovation in ICTs and e-commerce in Africa. In this regards A-eTrade Group aims to support this trend.

Mr. Mulualem Syoum of A-eTrade Group stated that the goal is to expand markets for African goods and services by enabling digital transformation across Africa. "Our commitment is to focus on and support SMEs in Africa which have already shown their proficiency in using mobile phones to run and expand their businesses. We believe, our approach brings much more employment opportunities and efficiencies in both the public and the private sectors. We are extremely delighted to partner with the AUC", he underscored. According to him, this is the first crucial step towards accelerating the adoption of a continent-wide e-commerce platform as well as associated administrative and regulatory frameworks supporting digital trade.

In his remarks, the Commissioner for Trade and Industry, H.E. Amb. Albert Muchanga, detailed opportunities that come with the unleashing of the e-commerce in Africa. "We are leveraging e-commerce to open up additional opportunities for sustainable development, anchored on small and medium enterprises and job creation for our youth. We in this respect see e-commerce accelerating Africa's sustainable development", he mentioned.

The AUC and A-eTrade Group will commence their collaboration immediately as per the Memorandum, and enhance their efforts towards making the services of A-eTrade Group available in 2019.

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NOTE TO EDITORS:

The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) is one of the portfolios of the African Union Commission that contributes to make Africa a more integrated trading bloc and a significant and competitive trading partner in the global economy.

The objectives of the Department are to:

- Establish and assist the functioning of free trade area in the Regional Economic Communities (RECs);
- Prepare the best conditions of dialogue and informed decision making by the AU RECs, Member States and other key stakeholders;
- Contribute to the establishment of an African Common Market and promote inter and Intra-African Trade;
- Expand Africa's market share in international trade;
- Initiate and promote measures that can promote the structural transformation of African economics through a self-sustained industrialization process;
- Promote common industrial policies and Monitor, Review, Coordinate, Evaluate and Report on RECs and Member States commitments to implement the Boosting Intra-African Trade (BIAT) Action Plan and establish the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) ;

- Harmonize industrial policies within and between RECs and monitor the implementation of AU decisions by RECs, Member States and Strategic Partners.
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African E-Trade Group is an initiative of multi-stakeholder and multi-talent group of African professionals and business people with a vision to develop and implement an e-empowerment programme for Africa with a focus on providing a continent wide e-commerce platform and capabilities that enhance intra and inter African trade.

The Group establishes alliances that will bring together public and private sector partners to develop projects that will deliver the opportunities and benefits of information and communication technologies into the hands of Africa's present and future entrepreneurs. The e-commerce initiative is primarily intended to promote African agricultural, industrial, artisanal or other local goods at regional and global markets.

The e-commerce initiative is planned to go hand-in-hand with e-Government Programme that aspires to build intelligent nations in Africa which use ICTs to promote good governance, enable revenue Authorities have better tax collection and reporting systems, and enhance user/consumer confidence by fostering transparency and accountability.

For more information, please contact Mr. Mulualem Syoum at African e-Commerce Development International (a non-for-profit affiliate of the A-eTrade Group), through e-mail: Mulualem@aecdi.org or telephone: +1 (514) 4969-0440.