

JOINT PRESS RELEASE

The A-eTrade Group, African Union Ministers of trade and Stakeholders, discuss the Progress in the Development of the Continental Platform on the margins of the Extra-Ordinary AU Summit in Niamey, Niger



Niamey, Niger, July 6, 2019 - The African Electronic Trade Group, the A-eTrade Group hosted in a partnership with the African Union Commission, a dinner at the Radisson Blu Hotel Niamey. The dinner brought together some 100 personalities from various African countries. Among the distinguished participants were the Honourable Ministers of Trade and Industry from Burkina Faso, Eswatini, Ethiopia and Ghana, Private Sector leaders and several Ambassadors and officials.

Open to the press, that dinner was another opportunity to present the A-eTrade Group project. In this presentation, Mr. Muluaem Syoum clarified the A-eTrade Group's mission and vision. He explained, among others, the ambitious goal of the A-eTrade Group: to contribute during the first four years of its activity, to the creation of 600,000 SMEs in Africa that will generate 22 million jobs. He presented the progress made in identifying countries that are interested and eligible to host five regional offices and one Headquarters for the AeTrade Group. He indicated that an announcement would be made on the margins of the Summit for the Western and the Southern regional offices. He also reassured the stakeholders that another call for proposals will be sent to all AU Member States in September 2019.

Minister Manqoba Khumalo spoke at this dinner. A former senior executive in the international private sector, he had recently joined the public service as Eswatini's minister. He showed how the African public service must improve if it wants to serve the population better. According to him, one way to improve is to learn lessons from the private sector's success. "The A-eTrade Group will be such a success, he said, because it will eliminate the many difficulties that have so far hindered intra Africa trade and Africa's trade with the rest of the world."

During the same dinner, His Excellency Gadussou Touré, Ambassador of the Republic of Guinea in Addis Ababa, said that the Guinean government appreciates all the more the A-eTrade Group, because it is a social enterprise acting in the new technologies sector. This is good because the Guinean government has made the development of new technologies, the main orientation of state policy. In this regard, the government regularly organizes technology fairs dedicated to start-ups and young Guinean entrepreneurs.

"The state cannot create the number of jobs needed for the large population that enters the labor market every year," said the Guinean ambassador. "The private sector, especially SMEs and particularly entrepreneurship, is the solution for the creation of those many jobs. The ambassador noted that the A-eTrade Group project would undoubtedly participate in this solution.

He recalled President Alpha Condé's remarks to his peers at a meeting in South Africa. "We are sitting on a time bomb that can explode at any moment: the strong growth of the population of young Africans."

By facilitating the creation and growth of SMEs, by activating the spirit of enterprise in the population, principally young Africans, the A-eTrade Group will offer its expertise in new technologies at the service of Africa's development. In the 1960s, the founding fathers of the Organization of African Unity played the leading role in the struggle for Africa's political independence.

With AfCFTA and the A-eTrade Group, today's generation of Africans has the opportunity to complement this political independence with what has so far been missing: economic independence.

NOTE TO EDITORS:

The African e-Trade Group is a social enterprise initiated by a group of African, multi-stakeholder and multi-talented professionals and entrepreneurs. The A-eTrade Group works to empower the African digital economy. This work focuses on a trading platform and capabilities that boost -African trade and African exports.

The A-eTrade Group builds alliances between the public and private sectors, to develop new technology projects that offer opportunities and benefits for African entrepreneurs, especially the youth and women.

The A-eTrade Group will use the resources of Artificial Intelligence to modernize the management of SMEs, increase their capacity to innovate, boost their management's mentality, and raise them to a level of global competition.

The A-eTrade Group will promote, on a large scale, services as well as African agricultural, industrial and craft products in the regional and global markets.

E-commerce or the digital business aspect of the business will have to go hand-in-hand with the e-government agenda that aspires to build smart nations in Africa. This is possible through the widespread use of ICT as a means of continuously improving good governance.

This will, for example, allow the tax authorities to have a transparent tax collection and reporting system, which will also have a better return. That transparency, that better

performance, will enhance citizens' trust in the state. Trust is the best foundation for any nation's prosperity.

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