



Joint Press Release

The Intra-African Trade Fair (IATF2020) Postponed due to COVID-19

Cairo, 29 April 2020: – In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, the African Export-Import Bank (Afreximbank), the African Union (AU) and the Government of Rwanda have decided to postpone by one year the second Intra-African Trade Fair (IATF2020) initially set to take place from 1 to 7 September 2020 in Kigali, Rwanda.

This decision was endorsed by the IATF2020 Advisory Council during its sixth meeting held virtually on 26 April 2020, after careful assessment of the situation.

Organised by Afreximbank in collaboration with the AU, the second IATF will still be hosted by the Government of Rwanda and is now scheduled to take place from 6 to 12 September 2021 in Kigali. It will now be dubbed IATF2021.

Afreximbank President Prof. Benedict Oramah said that the continuing COVID-19 pandemic situation was not conducive to holding such an important pan African event which was initially scheduled to take place in just 4 months.

“The COVID-19 pandemic has forced Governments, corporations and individuals to take unprecedented measures to ensure public safety,” he said. “It is our responsibility to comply with these measures to protect our host country and ensure the health and safety of all delegates, exhibitors and participants who have confirmed or expressed interest in taking part in the second edition of IATF.”

Stressing the need to enable participants to fully benefit from the opportunities offered by the trade fair, Amb. Albert Muchanga, Commissioner for Trade and Industry of the African Union said that the postponement would allow stakeholders to focus on the urgent collective task of responding to the pandemic.

“We are facing an unprecedented health crisis. This is the time to join efforts to also mitigate the impact of the pandemic on African economies. We have agreed that the second IATF needed to take place in a more favourable context to enable African

countries and companies to take full advantage of the Trade Fair, which will now become an element of their recovery strategy” said Amb. Muchanga.

Soraya Hakuziyaremye, Minister of Trade and Industry of Rwanda reiterated the commitment of the government of Rwanda to the success of the trade fair.

“The reality we are confronted with today as we fight the spread of Covid-19 has prompted us to look at various factors which will undoubtedly impact African businesses and investors this year. In partnership with Afreximbank and the AU Commission, Rwanda is looking forward to the second IATF in 2021 to boost intra African trade, which is more than ever crucial to the development of our continent,” Hon. Hakuziyaremye said.

Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, IATF Advisory Council Chairman and former President of Nigeria said: “We offer sincere condolences to the families, friends and colleagues of all those who have lost their lives because of the coronavirus. We also wish all those who have been affected by the virus speedy recovery. We hope that this pandemic will soon be overcome to enable normal businesses to resume and underpin the forthcoming Trade Fair.”

The Advisory Council also decided to postpone the third edition of IATF from 2022 to 2023 to be in line with the two-year intervals between IATF events.

About the second Intra-African Trade Fair: the second edition of the biennial Intra-African Trade Fair (IATF) will provide a platform for entry into a single market of over 1.2 billion people joined together by the African Continental Free Trade Area, serving as a marketplace bringing together continental and global buyers and sellers and showcasing goods and services. It will enable stakeholders to share trade, investment and market information as well as trade finance and trade facilitation solutions designed to support intra-African trade and African economic integration. In addition to establishing a business-to-business and a business-to-government exchange platform for business deals and advisory services, the second IATF will also operate a Virtual Trade Fair on an interactive online platform accessible to all. It will also focus on Africa’s creative economy as well as the automotive industry with dedicated programmes. A Conference will run alongside the exhibition and will feature high-profile speakers and panellists addressing topical issues relating to trade finance, payments, trade facilitation, trade-enabling infrastructure, harmonisation of trade standards, industrialization, regional value chains and investment. For more information, visit: www.intrafricantradefair.com

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