



INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION DIRECTORATE

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Africa to redouble efforts to deepen African Economic Integration: Africa Integration Day 2022

The operationalization of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), one of the flagship projects of Agenda 2063, represents an opportunity in Africa's journey towards the operationalization of an integrated market, that will eventually culminate in the formation of an African Economic Community, as espoused in the Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community (Abuja Treaty) which was adopted on 3 June 1991 and entered into force on 12 May 1994. The accelerated full implementation of the AfCFTA, is expected to promote economic dynamism among African Union Member States. The large economic block coupled with the promotion of regional value chains, is expected to quicken Africa's value addition to exports and industrialization process

The African Union Commission's Department of Economic Development, Trade, Tourism, Industry, and Minerals and the Member States, Regional Economic Communities (RECs), Pan-African Private Sector, Civil Society, Academia, Research Institutions, Women and Youths celebrated the 3rd edition of the Africa Integration Day under the theme "***Deepening African Economic Integration in the Era of De-Globalization***" on 7th July 2022, Lusaka, Zambia.

The overall objective of the commemoration of the 2022 African Integration Day and Forum was for African governments, private sector, civil society, RECs and AU partners to deliberate on how to utilize regional and continental integration processes and initiatives to foster accelerated Africa's economic integration in its recovery in the post-COVID era.

Speaking on behalf of the Chairperson of the AU Commission, His Excellency **Moussa Faki Mahamat**, **H.E. Dr. Monique Nsanzabaganwa**, the Deputy Chairperson of the African Union Commission emphasized that Integration is the very essence of the existence of the African Union and it is the founding component of the Organization of Africa in the early 1960s. She highlighted some of the progress that had been achieved by the AU member states in accelerating the integration despite the global uncertainties and insecurities caused by the ravages of the COVID-19, and the Russia-Ukrainian conflict respectively. **H.E Dr. Monique** called upon all African Governments, the private sector and civil society organizations to redouble their efforts to give concrete meaning to trade and economic integration in Africa, so that ordinary Africans, across the continent, including in the most remote regions, could derive significant benefits.

H.E Amb. Albert Muchanga, Commissioner for Economic Development, Trade, Tourism, Industry and Minerals welcoming participants to the celebration of the third edition of the Africa Integration day, mentioned few of several factors that confront the continent. “The future of Africa in this new global environment lies in deeper economic integration, continent-wide. We are stronger working together; and, more resilient. We are weaker; and more vulnerable working as individual countries,” he said. Amb. Muchanga encouraged African citizens; cross-border traders; schools; colleges; universities; organized labour; and, the media, among several stakeholders to be actively involved in the African economic integration agenda.

“The private sector is advocating for the enabling environment for realizing our African Integration and increasing our Intra Africa Trade. We need to have policies for a special percentage of at least 40 percent of the Government Procurement to be allocated for our African businesses, including SMEs, Women and Youth Owned Businesses,” said **Dr. Amany Asfour**, President of the Africa Business Council. She added that, “In order increase our Intra Africa Trade, we have to invest in our own resources for industrialization and Value addition, and invest in building Capacity of our human resources, including Women and Youth.”

Speaking about the importance of Tripartite Free Trade Area (TFTA), **Mr. Patson Malisa**, Deputy Presiding Officer of the AU’s Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC) said, “the Tripartite FTA remains a relevant building bloc to continental integration, and the AfCFTA in particular.” He further added that, “the TFTA RECs Secretariats need to be strengthened (through Technical Assistance and Financial Support) in order to enhance their readiness and accrued advantage to participate in AfCFTA.”

Senior officials from the AU member states, AU specialized institutions, RECs, institutions from the UN system and other development cooperating partners, African financial institutions, the private sector, academia, youth, women, civil society and diaspora also attended the event.

About the Africa Integration Day

In 2019, the African Union Heads of State and Government designated 7th of July of each year as “**the African Integration Day**” to celebrate major achievements attained in regional and continental integration process, and also, to deliberate on critical lessons learned, with a view of addressing challenges being faced.

Africa's integration Agenda is enshrined in the Abuja Treaty (1991), and has an overarching goal of achieving an African Economic Community at continental level, in six successive stages, which include the strengthening of sectoral cooperation and the creation of regional free trade areas, establishment of a Continental Customs Union, Common Market, Monetary Union, and eventually African Economic Community. The consolidation of the African economic integration will hinge upon the AfCFTA, Protocol on the Free Movement of People, Right of Residence and Right of Establishment, coupled with industrialisation, infrastructural development and social integration.



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