

INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION DIRECTORATE

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African Union Unveils Digital AfCFTA & Vaccination Platforms at 2022 “Boma”

The Deputy Chairperson of the African Union, H.E. Monique Nsanzabaganwa, opened the Boma of Africa event on 8th July 2022 to crown the activities marking this year’s Africa Integration Day. The theme of the Boma this year was, aptly, “Taking Stock of the African Century”, reflecting increasing interest in the belief that Africa’s rise in the 21st century as envisaged under Agenda 2063 will be globally definitive. The 2022 Boma was convened jointly by the African Union and AfroChampions.

Reflecting the balance between deliberation and action, the Boma was segmented into three parts. Two parts focused on the launch of major practical initiatives driving integration on the continent: a Common Vaccine Passport (www.africacdc.org/trusted-vaccines) embedded in continental eHealth Backbone (www.panabios.org) and a platform for the AfCFTA Digital Trading Corridor (www.afcfta.app).

The third component of the program was in the form of a symposium convened at Heads of State and Chief Executive level to examine the key collective strategies that African leaders can use to manage recovery from the twin crisis of COVID-19 and the Russia-Ukraine conflict, entrench resilience against future global shocks, and accelerate the rise of the continent as captured by Agenda 2063.

Pledges of support and cooperation to Africa CDC and AfroChampions in relation to the Trusted Vaccines and PanaBIOS eHealth platform came from the governments of India, Singapore, United Kingdom, Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) and Australia. As well as the World Health Organisation, European Union and ICAO. Supporters of the initiative include the Africa Society of Laboratory Medicine (ASLM), African Organisation of Standardisation (ARSO), Koldchain, Africa Tourism Board, Esri; and regional health authorities such as the West Africa Health Organisation (WAHO) and the East, Central & Southern Africa Health Agency (ECSA)

The results of a consultative process ahead of the launch of the AfCFTA Hub digital trading ecosystem platform by the AfCFTA Secretariat were presented in the forms of video showing strong support from major logistics companies such as RwandAir, Kenya Airways, Ethiopian Airlines and Asky. Continental retail and distribution companies like MaxMart, Melcom, Walmart Africa and Naivas were also successfully engaged. On the digital, financial services, and fintech fronts, companies that participated in the launch of the AfCFTA Hub included M-Pesa, PAPSS, Vodacom, Orange, WebbFontaine, Scanning Systems, and Standard Bank. Input into the development finance prospects came from the African Development Bank (AfDB).

The Symposium brought together African Union Heads of State and Government H.E. Hakainde Hichelema of Zambia, H.E. Nana Akufo-Addo of Ghana, and H.E. Cyril Ramaphosa of South Africa to engage with global and continental business leaders and Heads of International Organisations. See the whole list of participants here- <https://au.int/en/newsevents/20220708/boma-africa-africa-integration-day>

Following the successful launch of the two digital platforms and extensive deliberations on new and innovative ways to galvanise collective action at continental level for smooth attainment of the Agenda 2063 goals, the Boma was successfully closed by H.E. Cessouma Minata Samate, African Union Commissioner for Health, Humanitarian Affairs and Social Development.

Practical Outcomes of Boma 2022.

This year, the African Union launched two main flagship initiatives at the Boma: the African Vaccine Passport and eHealth backbone (www.africacdc.org/trusted-vaccines) and a digital platform for accelerating the implementation of the AfCFTA (www.afcfta.app).

The African Vaccine Passport allows every African Union citizen to acquire a free digital proof of their vaccinations that can be verified around the world utilising the PanaBIOS (www.panabios.org) and UNDP-backed Global Haven (www.globalhaven.org) mechanisms.

The digital platform, called the AfCFTA Hub, interconnects national, regional and private digital applications together to boost the ability of SMEs to expand their business and/or export their products across Africa through improved logistics, networking of retail outlets, integration of fintechs and brand development support. Financing is provided through the affiliated AfCFTA Caravan Initiative. Every SME or startup in the African Union is now entitled to a free AfCFTA Number following the launch.

There is a supply chain component called, ProPer (www.properseals.org), for managing the potential negative side effects of the AfCFTA trade liberalisation scheme such as dumping, smuggling and counterfeiting.

About The Boma of Africa

The Boma of Africa a festival of the ideas and actions changing Africa in radical ways and in commemoration of Africa Integration Day. It is curated by the African Union and AfroChampions, under the terms of their strategic partnership, and sponsored by the AfCFTA Hub Network and the continental private sector.

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