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Programme Highlights

March - July 2022 - Issue #2

One Trade Africa takes centre stage at Dubai Expo

7 March 2022, 15:00-16:00 (Dubai)
UN Hub, <https://bit.ly/35e8OO4>

Making One Trade Africa a Reality

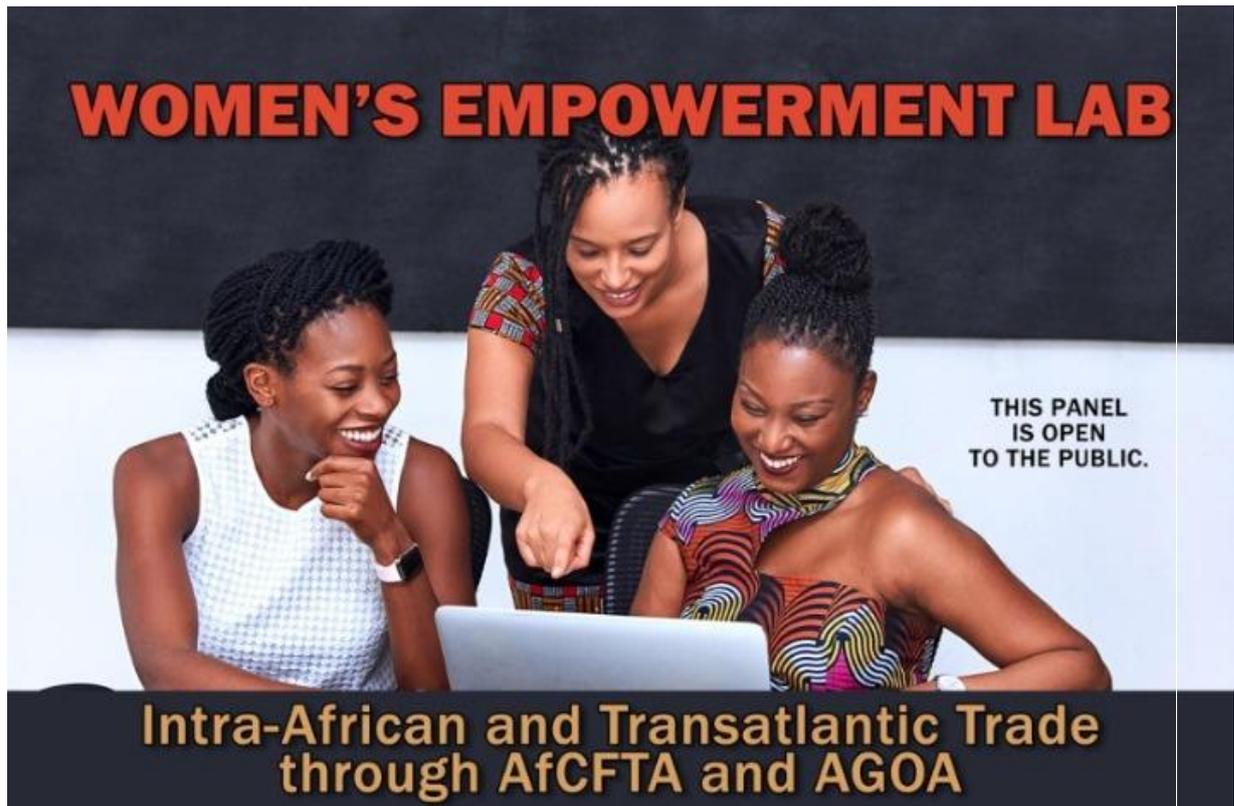


During ITC's Small Business Week at the Dubai Expo 2020 on 28 February to 7 March 2022, One Trade Africa organized a discussion on "Making One Trade Africa a Reality". The hybrid event held on 7 March 2022 explored solutions to eliminate the information and financing gap experienced by women and youth entrepreneurs in Africa. The session identified key opportunities for innovation and improving connections in business for economic transformation across the continent.

Pamela Coke-Hamilton, ITC Executive Director: ***"In 2022, One Trade Africa will gradually scale up its activities and broaden its offering to support the on-going regional integration process. Our overarching goal will remain unchanged: to build productive capacities and strengthen continental value chains to foster Africa's sustainable and inclusive transformation"***



ITC, Howard University and US State Department launch Women's Empowerment Lab



On 15 March 2022, ITC co-launched the Women’s Empowerment Lab with Howard University, the US Embassy in Accra, and the US State Department.

The “Providing Opportunities for Women’s Economic Rise” (POWER) Women’s Empowerment Lab is an initiative of the US State Department that offers diplomatic resources to promote women in business and the business environment by working with partners such as ITC and Howard University to establish professional networks for women’s economic empowerment.

The online event included a high-level panel from Africa and the US that discussed the needs of women-owned businesses to expand exports under the Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA). The women-led businesses operating in sectors such as Cocoa also took part in two training workshops offered by ITC’s SME Trade Academy and SheTrades programme.



Pamela Coke-Hamilton, ITC Executive Director: ***“By mainstreaming gender policies, the AfCFTA provides a gateway for women-led businesses to formalize their activities and tap into the continental market. When we place women at the heart of African trade, it builds a more integrated market; it creates continental value chains; it secures decent jobs for both women and youth”***

Stephanie Sullivan, US Ambassador to Ghana: ***“The US Government stands ready to assist both US and Ghanaian women-owned companies to take advantage of transatlantic and intra-African trade opportunities through initiatives such as Prosper Africa, the West Africa Trade and Investment Hub, AGOA, among others”***

Patricia Poku-Diaby, CEO of Plot Enterprise a Ghanaian cocoa company: ***“In our industry, 80% of our cost of production is linked to a commodity traded on the London and New York market. Unfortunately to date, there is no financial tool in West Africa to manage the risk with this volatility”***

Zimbabwe hosts AfCFTA export workshop



After ratifying the AfCFTA on 25 April 2019, Zimbabwe is supporting its private sector to take advantage of trade opportunities brought about by the continental Agreement. A group of 15 small businesses and 30 ZimTrade staff attended ITC's "How to Export with the AfCFTA" national workshop held from 3 to 6 May 2022. The four-day training included dynamic tutorial sessions and presentations to identify AfCFTA opportunities. Trainees also mastered export formalities and identified viable opportunities as well as financing options.

Using a new digital approach called the "digital workshop methodology," the workshop included several interactive digital presentations, videos, exercises, trainer guides, and online sessions for ZimTrade hosted on the Afreximbank Academy platform.

Tofara Chokera, ZimTrade training participant: ***“The workshop was well planned, with relevant information on the AFCFTA and included the fusing of video lessons, discussions and Q&A sessions”***



ITC will hold additional online training sessions to support Zimbabwe trainers in developing their facilitation skills to train.

WTPO 2022: ITC and the AfCFTA Secretariat sign MoU



From 17 to 18 May 2022, the 13th edition of the World Trade Promotion Organization (WTPO) Awards took place in Accra under the theme “Bold Solutions for Resilience and Recovery.”

On the margins of the event, the ITC Executive Director, Pamela Coke-Hamilton and the Secretary General of the AfCFTA Secretariat, H.E Wamkele Mene, signed an MOU providing a framework for the two organizations to cooperate in supporting the implementation of the AfCFTA by promoting customized support for least developed and land-locked countries.



Under the agreement, the two organizations will work to improve the competitiveness of African businesses with a particular focus on women and youth entrepreneurs. The AfCFTA Private Sector Engagement Plan will empower entrepreneurs to benefit from the continental market and expand business opportunities through actively participating in regional and continental value chains.

Pamela Coke-Hamilton, ITC Executive Director: ***“We are committed to realizing the promise of the free trade agreement to unlock the continent’s potential and equip African businesses to capitalize on this agreement”***

Leaders of the ECOWAS Network of Trade Promotion Organization leaders convened a General Assembly on 19 and 20 May to Trade promotion organizations (TPOs) to encourage businesses to embrace the current trend towards digitization to boost trade volumes.



Afua Asabea Asare, GEPA CEO: ***“We must get to a point where value chain actors in the region, through the power of demand and supply, can easily locate each other to strike business deals without the hustle of moving round and round”***

Pamela Coke-Hamilton, ITC Executive Director: ***“Multilateralism, however, builds on a strong regional agenda, and TPO networks are a critical part of the structure. The ECOWAS TPO network is therefore essential for ECOWAS efforts to build a stronger regional economy which will provide a springboard for a successful participation in the AfCFTA”***

Africa Day 2022



Africa Day which takes place on 25 May 2022 is a time to take stock of the continent's accomplishment and aspirations. To mark the event, ITC's Senior AfCFTA Coordinator Aissatou Diallo shared her views on the transformative potential of the AfCFTA and One Trade Africa's goals with [FinancialAfrik](#) and [Radio France Internationale](#).

OTA holds AfCFTA workshop for Moroccan MSMEs



In recent years, the Kingdom of Morocco has increased its interest in expanding and diversifying its trade to Africa. On 25 and 26 May 2022, almost two hundred participants attended a workshop themed “Helping Moroccan Exporters Make the Best of the AfCFTA opportunities.”

The Moroccan Ministry of Trade and Industry and the One Trade Africa programme held the hybrid workshop in Casablanca which featured presentations and inputs from Moroccan officials and ITC representatives. Panel discussions focused on the new continental trade agreement, its regulatory requirements, and hurdles facing Moroccan exporters, including non-tariff and cultural barriers, financing capacities, logistics, value chains, and safety, to name a few.



Lilia Naas, Head of the ITC Regional Office for Arab States: ***“This first-ever training workshop on the AfCFTA organized by ITC in Morocco is a renewed testament to the ties built over the years between the Kingdom of Morocco and our organization to support Moroccan businesses’ efforts as they strive to diversify and achieve growth in the new market”***

Benjelloun Mohammed, Director of International Trade Relations: **welcomed the timing of ITC workshop on the heels of the recent ratification of the AfCFTA Treaty by the Kingdom of Morocco and gave a brief update on the implementation of the agreement.**

Ali El Harti, Head of the Moroccan National Federation of Electricity, Electronics and Renewable Energies: **underscored the need for export businesses to have a “structured approach and the right staff as they target a new market.”**



Hailing ITC's long-standing collaboration with its Moroccan partners, Aissatou Diallo, Senior Coordinator for AfCFTA and LDCs confirmed the One Trade Africa programme's keen interest in organizing further capacity building events for Moroccan MSMEs and mentioned the next training will take place later this year.

West African Chambers of Commerce discuss benefits of digitalization

The Covid-19 era has underscored the importance of digital platforms in improving business support service delivery. From 25 to 26 May, the One Trade Africa programme organized a capacity building session

themed “Business Support Organizations Digitalization for AfCFTA Optimization” Harnessing Digital Tools and Platforms for Scale and Efficiency.”

The workshop delivered by Ms. Miyoba Lubemba, ITC Senior Programme Officer for Institutional Strengthening, allowed participants to discuss key digitalization concepts and the principles of a successful transition to digital platforms. The event was attended by representatives of various Nigerian and West African Business Support Associations, including the Federation of West African Chambers of Commerce and Industries (FEWACCI), one the beneficiaries of the OTA programme.

Speaking to the pitfalls of the exporting process and to the usefulness of technology to facilitate data-driven decision making, Miyoba Lubemba ITC Senior Programme Officer, Institutional Strengthening stressed that digitalization is a change process which required a cultural shift: ***“The capacity to use technology for service delivery is self-propagating. You must be able to visualize the journey to optimize it”***

Aminou Akadiri, Executive Director FEWACCI, African Business Council (AfBC): ***“Africa needs to rethink on how to remove obstacles on trading amongst us by using our comparative advantages to have products labelled "AfCFTA product (C)" with Africa Standard Mark that can freely move across border as pilot scheme”***

Following his remarks, Aminou Akadiri engaged with the participants and updated them on the ongoing building of the FEWACCI digital platform. A similar workshop for East African Business Associations will take place soon in Arusha, Tanzania.

29th Afreximbank Annual Meetings



ITC participated in the 29th Afreximbank Annual Meetings from 15 to 18 June 2022 in Cairo. Themed “Realizing the AfCFTA Potential in the post COVID-19 Era—Leveraging the power of the youth”, was officially launched by His Excellency President Al Sisi of Egypt. During the forum, Afreximbank, the AfCFTA Secretariat and ITC announced the creation of a steering committee aimed at monitoring the progress of the “How to export with the AfCFTA” training programme.

Other highlights included the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Afreximbank and the AfCFTA Secretariat, including the launch of an AfCFTA Adjustment Fund, and ITC’s announcement that it was finalizing a forthcoming MOU with Afreximbank.

As she addressed the session on “Closing the Gender Gap to Realize the AfCFTA Potential: Youth, Women and Entrepreneurship in Africa,” ITC Senior Coordinator for AfCFTA and LDCs, Aissatou Diallo, stressed that in order to ensure truly inclusive outcomes under the AfCFTA, there was a need to empower and support women and youth entrepreneurs operating in Africa’s private sector. She further elaborated this during a [CNBC Africa interview](#) that focused on the need to demystify the AfCFTA for African small businesses.



The ITC team also met with senior officials from the Islamic Development Bank and the Export Promotion Authority of the Democratic Republic of Congo, took part in several high-level sessions, and engaged event participants at a booth displaying the organization's flagship programmes including One Trade Africa, SheTrades – AfCFTA, and the “How to Export with the AfCFTA” online training.

Event participants included representatives of the African Union Commission and AU Member States, the AfCFTA Secretariat, the African Development Bank, the African Business Council, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, the United Nations Development Programme, Regional Economic Commissions, as well chambers of commerce, export promotion institutions, and bank industry professionals.

Small businesses explore adopting digital technologies to spur economic development



ITC in coordination with the African Continental Free Trade Area (AWYEG), the Commercial Law Development Program (CLDP), Organization of Women in International Trade (OWIT) and the Africa Technology and Creatives Group (ATCG) organized a two-day workshop between the 23-24th June in Nairobi, Kenya.

The two-day workshop highlighted the potential impact of the AfCFTA once policies, initiatives and legislation are adopted to benefit women and youth-led businesses. The event was attended by stakeholders from mobile financial services, cultural, entertainment as well as tourism sectors. The sessions also provided an opportunity to take note of the challenges facing women and youth in these innovative sectors, and ways the AfCFTA can cater to these cultural and creative sectors.



ITC AfCFTA and Regional Integration expert, Steve Machage presented on the AfCFTA regulations and influence on African Trade (digital and creative economies). He also emphasized the need for women and youth involvement in cross-border trade by adopting essential technology to access new markets available through the AfCFTA.

ITC contributes to AfCFTA workshop on Women and Youth Protocol

During the workshop on the Women and Youth protocol organized by the AfCFTA Secretariat ITC's SheTrades and Youth and Trade programmes presented on lessons learned in work related to women and youth in the AfCFTA with an aim of contributing to elements of the AfCFTA Protocol on Women and Youth.

Focusing its presentation on the Women in Trade chapter, SheTrades focused on two areas of work: the SheTrades Outlook tool and its work with Women's Business Associations in Africa. A survey of 70 African women's business associations found that 56% of these associations felt their members were not taking advantage of regional trade agreements. SheTrades shared four key findings:

- Countries tend to score higher in Legal and Regulatory Framework Pillar, and score lower in Trade Policy Pillar
- Countries that collect gender-disaggregated data tend to have higher overall SheTrades Outlook score
- Countries from diverse levels of development have success stories on promoting gender equality
- Countries tend to do better in establishing laws than implementing programmes

Launched in July 2020, SheTrades Outlook is a policy tool available across 26 African countries and provides 82 indicators on trade and women's economic empowerment. To bolster resources on the AfCFTA and women-owned businesses, nine policy briefs covering trade facilitation, non-tariff barriers, standards, and strengthening women's associations among others were developed.

ITC strengthens ties with partners to advance AfCFTA agenda

On the margins of World Trade Organisation 12th Ministerial Conference, ITC attended the African Union retreat on 11 June 2022. Executive Director, Pamela Coke-Hamilton emphasized ITC's priorities in Africa which centred on serving small businesses with a focus on women and young entrepreneurs.

This involves prioritizing gender equality, championing new entrepreneurship for youth and encouraging business sustainability. ITC is equipping small businesses to become shock-resistant by introducing digital solutions and moving businesses into the circular economy as part of the green revolution.



Later in the month, Deputy Executive Director, Dorothy Tembo attended the Africa Ireland Forum on 30 June 2022. Deputy Executive Director Tembo raised three core items to achieve the AfCFTA's full potential, the need for the African private sector to take part in realizing the Agreement's implementation, the need to prioritize institution building in Africa and finally the need for inclusivity for women and youth-owned businesses.



AU SME Annual Forum



ITC virtually took part in the first African Union's (AU) first ever SME Annual Forum themed "Economic empowerment of SMEs, women and youth entrepreneurs to realize Africa's industrialization in the context of the integrated market." The forum took place 27 June to 1 July in Cairo, Egypt.

The forum celebrated the UN MSME day – 27 June - by recognizing women and youth entrepreneurs with awards. The main objective of the Forum was to enhance SME competitiveness through training and capacity building, with a focus on intellectual property rights, access to finance, markets, and e-commerce. It also advocated for the implementation of the AU SME Strategy which seeks to "develop competitive, diversified and sustainable economies underpinned by dynamic, entrepreneurial and industrial sectors that generate employment, reduce poverty and foster social inclusion."

ITC Deputy Executive Director Dorothy Tembo: **congratulated the AU for the launch of the Enterprise Africa Network (EAN).** *"The platform will*

help to grow a pool of competitive and well-positioned African businesses in the region, continent, and internationally”

She also commended the decision to focus the EAN on women and youth entrepreneurs, emphasizing the commitment to ensure these groups equal participation and access to opportunities as part of the blueprint for SME competitiveness and ITC’s model to generate systemic change. She concluded by highlighting ITC’s continued efforts to scale up activities in Africa through building the One Trade Africa programme designed to maximize the benefits of regional integration for MSMEs, women and youth entrepreneurs.

Representatives from ITC’s SME Trade Academy and Sector Enterprise Competitiveness teams presented ITC products and services on SME development and contributed to a forum session on “Experience Sharing on Available support for SMEs from AU and Partners.” Other partners speaking in this session included AUDA-NEPAD, SMEDAN, Afrochampions and WIPO.

Follow up meetings with AUC and AUDA-NEPAD to explore cooperation opportunities will be organised to support SME competitiveness including tailored trainings and operationalization of the EAN.

Upcoming Events

28 July 2022 Side Event at the WTO Global Aid for Trade Review: AfCFTA and the fundamentals for a new development pathway for Africa – ITC and UNDP

27-28 August 2022 8th Tokyo International Conference on African Development

August 2022 ITC-CUTS AfCFTA sensitisation workshop in Lusaka

August – November 2022 Series of PPDs and delivery of the “How to

Export with the AfCFTA” training in Sierra Leone – ITC and Ministry of Trade

1-3 September 2022 Africa-Caribbean Trade and Investment Forum 2022: Africa and the Caribbean Partnering for Prosperity – ITC and AFREXIMBANK

15-16 September 2022 Leveraging the AfCFTA: West Meets East Africa Trade Mission & Business Development Tour – ITC and Global Compass

26-28 September 2022 AfCFTA Trade and Investment Forum in Dakar, Senegal – AfCFTA Secretariat with ITC support

27-28 September 2022 Africa Women Trade Conference in Abuja, Nigeria – OWIT and ITC

September 2022 AfCFTA Sensitisation Forum in Togo – ITC and Ministry of Trade

September 2022 ITC CUTS AfCFTA sensitisation workshop in Arusha

September 2022 Side event at the WTO Public Forum: MSMEs: the key to realising sustainable gains under the AfCFTA – ITC and UNECA

October 2022 AfCFTA Services Workshop in Madagascar – ITC and Ministry of Trade

20-25 November 2022 The African Union Summit on Industrialization and Economic Diversification in Niamey, Niger

25-27 November 2022 Creative Africa Nexus (CANEX) meeting in Abidjan

We encourage you to listen to [Informal Exchanges | a podcast by ITC Trade Facilitation Team](#) (podbean.com), the podcast looks at informal trade in Africa.

With support from its partners, ITC through One Trade Africa will maximize the benefits of the regional integration for African businesses especially within the context of the AfCFTA. One Trade Africa will continue to work alongside various partners including: Member States, AUC/ ETIM, AfCFTA Secretariat, AU-NEPAD, regional economic communities, United Nations agencies (UNECA,

UNCTAD, UNDP, UNIDO) and regional banks such as the African Export and Import Bank and the African Development Bank, think-tanks and the civil society.

To learn more about the One Trade Africa Programme visit:

One Trade Africa



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