



Nations Unies
Commission économique pour l'Afrique

Expert Group Meeting



Rabat
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Recommandations

Session 1 : Session 1: Status and challenges of AfCFTA

For Member States

- **Accelerate the operationalization of the AfCFTA agreement:** Prioritize the finalization of regulatory frameworks and pending items under the AfCFTA protocols to ensure seamless private sector engagement. Establish autonomous and well-resourced institutional mechanisms, such as national committees, commissions, and secretariats, to drive implementation and monitor progress. Develop clear guidelines and timelines to fast-track these processes while ensuring inclusivity.
- **Strengthen national and regional coordination:** Facilitate active collaboration between national committees to share lessons learned, best practices, and implementation challenges. Enhance the role of regional economic communities like ECOWAS, UEMOA, and UMA to support harmonization, reduce duplication, and streamline trade policies. Foster multi-stakeholder dialogues to align national efforts with regional goals for AfCFTA implementation.
- **Enhance awareness and capacity-building:** Launch targeted awareness campaigns and capacity-building programs tailored to youth, women, and SMEs to equip them with the knowledge and tools needed to access AfCFTA opportunities. Establish mentorship programs, training workshops, and digital platforms to promote skill development, financial literacy, and trade facilitation for these groups.

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- **Develop and update AfCFTA strategies:** Conduct regular assessments of national AfCFTA strategies to ensure they reflect emerging challenges, such as climate shocks, geopolitical shifts, and global economic changes. Integrate adaptive measures, including risk management frameworks and sector-specific action plans, to ensure resilience. Leverage digital tools for data collection and monitoring to refine strategies over time.
- **Facilitate intra-regional trade through infrastructure investment:** Commit to large-scale investments in critical infrastructure, such as roads, railways, ports, and digital connectivity, to enhance trade logistics and accessibility. Develop integrated transport corridors to reduce transit times and costs while supporting green infrastructure initiatives to align with environmental goals. Foster public-private partnerships to finance these projects and ensure sustainability.
- **Allocate financing to support AfCFTA strategies:** Mobilize innovative financing mechanisms, such as blended finance, green bonds, and development bank resources, to support AfCFTA strategies. Establish dedicated funds for SMEs, women-owned businesses, and startups to enhance their capacity to compete in regional markets.

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- **Reduce non-tariff barriers and simplify trade processes:** Implement comprehensive reforms to streamline customs processes, reduce bureaucracy, and cut administrative costs that hinder cross-border trade. Develop digital customs systems, harmonize tariff classifications, and adopt standardized trade documents to minimize delays and inefficiencies. Establish dispute resolution mechanisms to address trade conflicts effectively.
- **Enhance visibility and information sharing:** Create centralized databases and digital platforms to showcase African countries' production capabilities, trade opportunities, and market demand. Promote the "Made in Africa" brand to boost global recognition of African goods and services. Organize national and regional roundtables to raise awareness, mobilize resources, and foster partnerships among key stakeholders, including governments, the private sector, and development partners.

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At regional level:

- **Enhance regional logistics and trade infrastructure for seamless integration:** Facilitate regional collaboration to optimize logistics and delivery infrastructure, focusing on the development of regional trade corridors and interconnected networks.
- **Strengthen regional market linkages and unified supply chains:** Develop stronger regional market linkages by connecting businesses across borders to establish unified and resilient supply chains. Promote partnerships between private and public sector actors to facilitate trade integration and create a cohesive regional market that enhances the competitiveness of African businesses within the AfCFTA framework.

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For ECA

- **Strengthen capacity-building and technical support for AfCFTA implementation:** Provide targeted technical assistance to member states to implement and enhance national and regional strategies, while ensuring capacity-building initiatives focus on resource mobilization and the development of structuring and transformational projects. These interventions should emphasize inclusive approaches that consider gender balance and the integration of marginalized groups in trade strategies.
- **Enhance trade facilitation through improved coordination and streamlined processes:** Promote stronger national coordination between customs, standards bodies, and regulatory agencies to simplify trade procedures. Establish mechanisms to share best practices across regions, ensuring that customs and regulatory processes are harmonized to reduce trade barriers and encourage cross-border trade under the AfCFTA framework.
- **Boost market visibility and private sector engagement:** Increase the availability and accessibility of market information to assess current trade volumes and identify potential opportunities among African countries. Create platforms such as trade fairs, forums, and visibility campaigns to mobilize the private sector, enhance the visibility of African entrepreneurs, and foster deeper intra-African trade connections.
- **Foster regional collaboration and gender-sensitive strategies:** Facilitate experience sharing among regions and encourage the coordination of AfCFTA national committees to align efforts and share lessons learned. Integrate gender equality as a key pillar of national trade strategies, ensuring that women and other underrepresented groups benefit from the economic opportunities created by the AfCFTA.

Session 2 : Exploiting innovative digital technologies to promote intra-regional trade

For Member States

- **Invest in e-commerce development across Africa:** Establish a robust and cohesive e-commerce ecosystem by harmonizing policies and regulations, adapting fiscal and administrative systems, enhancing digital security, expanding digital infrastructure, and promoting easy e-payment solutions. Empower businesses and individuals through targeted capacity-building programs to ensure they can fully benefit from the opportunities offered by e-commerce
- **Strengthen trust and inclusivity in e-commerce:** Streamline transnational procedures, establish continental labels and standards to ensure quality and reliability, and develop user-friendly digital payment solutions. Expand reliable internet and mobile connectivity across rural and urban areas, supported by targeted digital skills training for key sectors and vulnerable populations to ensure inclusivity.
- **Harmonize policies for a unified digital market:** Align national regulations with the African Union Digital Transformation Strategy and AfCFTA protocols to establish a single African digital market. Standardize data privacy, consumer protection, and cybersecurity regulations to create a cohesive digital trade ecosystem.

Session 2 : Exploiting innovative digital technologies to promote intra-regional trade

- **Support SME integration into e-commerce and AfCFTA opportunities:** Enhance SME readiness for e-commerce through targeted capacity-building programs, financial support, and guidance in identifying promising value chains and markets at the continental level.
- **Empower SMEs with financial and technical support:** Provide small and medium enterprises (SMEs) with resources to improve e-commerce readiness, adopt digital payment solutions, and enhance their ability to engage in digital trade. Expand mobile money services and user-friendly e-payment systems to boost financial inclusion.
- **Promote cross-border trade through fintech and branding:** Support the adoption of innovative fintech solutions to address payment system challenges and facilitate cross-border trade. Develop standardized labels and certifications, such as a "Made in Africa" brand, to enhance global recognition of African e-commerce products.

Session 2 : Exploiting innovative digital technologies to promote intra-regional trade

- **Strengthen data protection and regional tech frameworks:** Enhance data protection measures in e-commerce to foster consumer trust and encourage investment. Simultaneously, implement regional technology frameworks at the national level and incorporate rules of origin for technology products to promote fair trade and technological growth.
- **Remove regulatory barriers to digital trade:** Address obstacles such as discriminatory internet traffic restrictions and limitations on digital transactions. Streamline policies to create an enabling environment for seamless digital trade across the continent.
- **Engage the diaspora in AfCFTA implementation:** Leverage the skills, networks, and investments of the African diaspora to support the operationalization of the AfCFTA through targeted programs and initiatives that foster their active participation in trade and development projects.

Session 2 : Exploiting innovative digital technologies to promote intra-regional trade

At regional level:

- **Enhance interoperability of payment systems for cross-border trade:** Develop and implement interoperable payment systems across African countries to enable seamless and efficient cross-border financial transactions, reducing barriers for businesses and fostering greater economic integration.
- **Develop unified continental e-commerce standards:** Establish comprehensive e-commerce standards and guidelines across the continent to build trust, enhance consumer protection, and attract investment, thereby creating a reliable and secure digital marketplace for businesses and consumers.

Session 3 : Trade and economic diversification strategies for sustainable growth

For Member States

- **Strengthen the policy framework for promoting industrialization and trade** (national and regional coherence) in view of maximizing the value added from their natural resources (processing and manufacturing industries), attracting Foreign Direct Investment and improving their inclusion into regional and global value chains.
- **Elaborate SMEs and entrepreneurship policies, including women and youth through strategic partnerships** to accelerate the development of RVC , increase value addition and foster a more inclusive growth. To work with international organization, governments and private sectors (PPPs) to create a cohesive system that support women and youth.
- **Develop digital transformation strategy including policies to drive trade simplification, increase productivity and boost economic diversification.**
- **Prioritize regional value chains in the conceptualization of national and regional policies in strategic sectors such as agriculture, renewable energy, digitalization, automotive, e-mobility, agribusiness, textile and pharmaceuticals.**
- **Harmonize regulatory frameworks supporting trade between Arab countries and Africa**
- **Integrate Youth and Women in all public strategies and policies**
- **Adopt innovation policies, skills development strategies, including TVET**
- **Accelerate digital adoption for SMEs to enhance market access and boost regional trade**
- **Prioritize investment in joint regional project such as trade corridors, power grids and digital connectivity**

Session 3 : Trade and economic diversification strategies for sustainable growth

For ECA:

- Support member states to build and develop SMEs trade and digital capacities with a particular focus on women and youth
- Support member states to identify potential trade complementarities through regional/sub-regional forums and provide technical assistance to facilitate trade and full implementation of the AfCFTA
- Provide technical support for the organization of Arab-Africa Business Forum
- Support member states to build and foster a coherent ecosystem to support women and youth inclusion in regional trade, through collaboration between international organizations, governments, private sectors and entrepreneurs
- Support members states in supporting the financial inclusion
- Support the adoption of digital tools to facilitate SMEs participation in regional trade
- Support the implementation of the national AfCFTA strategies focusing of the reduction of both tariffs and non tariffs barriers
- Support member states to develop green value chain.