

# Enhancing Trade and Industrial Development – AfCFTA – A Game Changer for Africa's Growth

## African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)



**VIRTUAL CONFERENCE**

**May 25 - 27, 2021**

**CONFERENCE PROGRAM**

**TUESDAY MAY 25, 2021**

## **OPENING CEREMONY**

**09.00 – 10.00 (GMT), 12.00 – 13.00 (GMT+3), 05.00 – 06.00 (EST)**

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### **OPENING SESSION**

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**CHAIR OF THE SESSION: Swithin Munyantwali**, Vice Chairman and Co-Founder, ILL-South African Centre for Excellence

#### **OPENING STATEMENT**

- **Pamela Reusch**, Legal Advisor (LL.M.), GIZ Regional Programs Africa, Regional Project "Promotion of Rule of Law and Judiciary in Africa"

**KEYNOTE ADDRESS - H.E. Wamkele Mene**, Secretary-General, AfCFTA Secretariat (TBC)

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### **SESSION I: What is the Potential of the African Continental Free Trade Area for Africa?**

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This session will unpack the potential of the AfCFTA for Africa – examining unprecedented economic opportunities the agreement holds for the continent.

**TIME: 11.00 – 12.30 (GMT)**

**14.00 – 15.30 (GMT +3)**

**7.00 – 8:30 (EST)**

#### **Speakers:**

- **Hon. Charles Stith**, Former US Ambassador to Tanzania and Chairman of the Pula group
- **Maame Awinador - Kanyirige**, International Trade Law Expert/Consultant, Blackbridge Consulting Group

**Chair of the Panel: Stuart Kerr**, President International Law Institute, Washington, D.C.

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## SESSION II: What are the Barriers to Achieving the African Continental Free Trade Area Post COVID-19?

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Following delays to launching the AfCFTA following COVID-19, this session will focus on the real barriers to achieving the benefits of the AfCFTA – challenges such as poor physical and digital infrastructure on the African continent, weak governance, budgetary constraints, rampant electricity shortages, and overlapping regional memberships.

**TIME: 13.00 – 14.30 (GMT)**

**16.00 – 17.30 (GMT +3)**

**9.00 – 10:30 (EST)**

### Speakers:

- **Professor Osagie Imasogie**, Member, Board of Trustees, University of Pennsylvania, US
- **Baroness Lynda Chalker**, Former Minister for Development, United Kingdom

**Chair of the Panel: Dr. Louis Kasekende**, Executive Director MEFMI/Former Deputy Governor, Bank of Uganda

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## SESSION III: What Can the AfCFTA Learn from the European Union?

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The session will explore the opportunities and challenges in launching the European Union, and lessons of experience for the AfCFTA.

**TIME: 15.00 – 16.30 (GMT)**

**18.00 – 19.30 (GMT +3)**

**11.00 – 12.30 (EST)**

### Speakers:

- **Dr. Arthur Appleton**, Partner, Appleton & Luff, Geneva, Switzerland
- **Swithin Munyantwali**, Vice Chairman and Co-Founder, ILI-South African Centre for Excellence
- **Patrick Macrory**, Director, International Trade Law Centre, International Law Institute, Washington, D.C.

**Chair of the Panel: Prof. Don Wallace, Jr**, Chairman, International Law Institute, Washington, D.C.

**WEDNESDAY MAY 26, 2021**

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## **SESSION IV: The Role of the Private Sector in Operationalizing the AfCFTA in Africa**

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The session will address the role of the private sector in operationalizing the AfCFTA in Africa. It will examine how private sector interests can be integrated into trade policymaking, and how regular interaction between the public and private sector will help realise the economic development objectives of the agreement.

**TIME: 08.30 – 10.00 (GMT)**

**11.30 – 13.00 (GMT +3)**

**04.30 – 06.00 (EST)**

**Speakers:**

- **Vimal Shah**, CEO Bidco Oil Refineries Ltd East and Central Africa
- **Hon. Mbhazima Shilowa**, Former Premier, Gauteng Province, South Africa

**Chair of the Panel: Kitili Mbathi**, Board Chairman, Stanbic Bank, Kenya

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## **SESSION V: What Role Can Women and Youth Play in Operationalizing the AfCFTA?**

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This session recognises that women and youth are a significant constituency in enhancing trade and investment, and yet, previous trade arrangements have not taken them into account. The session will explore potential opportunities for women and youth-led firms.

**TIME: 10.30 – 12.00 (GMT)**

**13.30 – 15.00 (GMT +3)**

**06.30 – 08.00 (EST)**

**Speakers:**

- **Ory Okolloh**, Impact Investor and Expert on Governance
- **Patricia Habu**, Former USAID Trade Specialist
- **Scheaffer Okore**, Senior Policy and Strategy Advisor at Reid Strategies, Advisory Board Member Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

**Chair of the Panel: Dr. Thelma Awori**, Former Assistant Secretary-General of the United Nations

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## SESSION VI: The Role of an Emerging Digital Economy in Implementation of the AfCFTA

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This session explores the opportunities that Africa can realise from a more digitised continent; as the globe rapidly digitises economic activity, it is incumbent upon Africa to seize opportunities to digitise to improve intra-Africa trade. The session will also examine the influence of artificial intelligence in this process.

**TIME: 13.00 – 14 .30 (GMT)**

**16.00 – 17.30 (GMT+3)**

**09.00 – 10.30 (EST)**

### Speakers:

- **Nik Nesbitt**, Chairman, East African Business Council
- **Alexandra Wallace**, Head of Media and Content, Verizon Media and Former Senior Vice President, NBC News, US

**Chair of the Panel: Vimal K. Ambat**, Chief Executive Officer – Airtel Money, Airtel Africa Operations

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## SESSION VII: Contemporary Environmental Issues Impacting International Trade

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The environment plays a central function in economic activity and increasingly all aspects of international commerce must demonstrate environmental sensitivity. This session will explore the environmental issues the AfCFTA will need to be aware of for successful implementation of the agreement.

**TIME: 15.00 – 16.30 (GMT)**

**18.00 – 19.30 (GMT+3)**

**11.00 – 12.30 (EST)**

### Speakers:

- **Prof. Richard Macrory**, Environmental Lawyer, London
- **Alex Rugamba**, Managing Partner, Gahinga Infrastructure Partners, Uganda

**Chair of the Panel: Prof. Katrin Kuhlmann**, Visiting Professor, Georgetown University Law Center

## THURSDAY MAY 27, 2021

### TIME: GROUP RESOLUTIONS

**8.30 – 12.30 (GMT)**

**11.30 – 15.30 (GMT+3)**

A group of participants from the business community will be selected in advance of the conference to deliberate on the questions below -- following attendance and participation in the first two (2) days of the conference, the participants will have established a better understanding of the challenges and opportunities following the introduction of the AfCFTA. This will inform their resolutions in the respective break-out sessions, and as discussed below.

Each group (under a team leader) will examine the question raised, deliberate and submit a brief report to the plenary of the recommendations.

These parallel groups will begin discussions at 8:30 a.m (GMT), and report back to the conference moderator at 11:30 a.m. Following review of the resolutions by the moderator, the respective group leaders will submit a brief report of their recommendations to the wider conference plenary at 12:00 p.m. The Conference will close at 12:30 p.m. (GMT)

These observations will be included in the final conference report, which will hopefully be submitted by GiZ to the AfCFTA Secretariat.

**Group 1:** What mechanisms can be put in place to ensure women and youth led firms effectively participate in the AfCFTA?

**Group 2:** Given the barriers to achieving the AfCFTA what concrete solutions can be envisaged to overcoming them?

**Group 3:** What role can the private sector play in operationalising the AfCFTA?