

**African Continental Free Trade Area Sensitization roadshow:
Abidjan welcomes the AfroChampions Initiative and the African Union for the second stop
SIFCA Chairman Jean-Louis Billon signs the AfroChampions Charter on Economic Integration
which has received positive feedback from the Ivorian business community**

Abidjan, May 29, 2018 - The AfroChampions Initiative and African Union Commission delegations have chosen Abidjan for the second stop of their West African roadshow to raise awareness on the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). Organized in collaboration with the Côte d'Ivoire Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the meeting brought together Ivorian economic operators, particularly from the sectors of agriculture, logistics and transport, as well as representatives from the subsidiaries of major international groups established in Côte d'Ivoire. Many strategic issues were addressed, such as non-tariff barriers, the situation of cross-border workers and traders, and the monitoring and traceability of products exported from Côte d'Ivoire to the rest of the sub-region.

For His Excellency Mr. Albert Muchanga, AU's Commissioner in charge of Trade and Industry of the African Union, *"it is essential that strategic markets, such as Côte d'Ivoire, which are regional hubs, drive the implementation of the AfCFTA. This is really our goal with this dialogue that we have initiated and that we hope to continue in partnership with the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Côte d'Ivoire which we thank for its support. Here we have a perfect reflection of Africa's economic diversity, with local, sub regional, and international actors, each facing different issues and whose feedback is very useful to prepare for the AfCFTA implementation phase."*

The President of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Côte d'Ivoire, Mr. Faman Touré, considered that the dialogue and consultation launched by the AfroChampions Initiative and the African Union as a pioneering approach. *"The AfCFTA Agreement is a strategic development for Africa, but it is true that entrepreneurs need to be better informed. This is an unprecedented opportunity; when we know that intra-African trade accounts for only 16% of the continent's trade, there is definitely scope for improvement! Economic actors must prepare, inform themselves, put in place the right teams. At the CCI-CI, we want to play our role and support them on all these aspects."*

"In Abidjan too, the AfroChampions Charter for Economic Integration has been well received and we hope to gather many signatories soon," added Jean-Louis Billon, Former Minister for Trade, Crafts and SMEs in Côte d'Ivoire, Chairman of SIFCA, and Vice-president of the AfroChampions Club for Western Africa who is the first signatory of the Charter on behalf of SIFCA. *"For the AfCFTA to be successful, we need to work better between Africans and set common ambitions as well as standards relevant to our continent, to guide economic integration in the right direction. This is the purpose of this Charter that we submit to private operators,"* he concluded.

After Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire, the AfCFTA roadshow will continue in Senegal. More tours are planned throughout this year in other regions of the continent, to mobilize local entrepreneurs but also to accompany the AfCFTA ratification process.

Note to editors

About the AfCFTA

The main objectives of the AfCFTA are to create a free trade area covering goods and services on the African continent, with free movement of persons and investments, and thus pave the way for deeper integration on the continent including the customs union and the single market. It will also expand intra-African trade through better harmonization and coordination of trade liberalization and facilitation across the RECs and across Africa in general. The AfCFTA is also expected to enhance competitiveness at the industry and enterprise level through exploitation of opportunities for scale production, continental market access and better reallocation of resources. Under the leadership of the AfCFTA Leader, Mr. Mahamadou Issoufou, President of the Republic of Niger, the AfCFTA agreement has been finalized by African Union Ministers for Trade on December 4, 2017 and signed by 44 African states on March 1, 2018 in Kigali under the aegis of the Rwandan Presidency of the African Union. It should be ratified by African Union member states throughout 2018, while discussions will continue on additional protocols and implementation processes until 2020.

About the African Union and its Department for Trade and Industry

The vision of the African Union is that of: “An integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in global arena.” To help achieving this vision on the economic front, the Department for Trade and industry, under the leadership of Commissioner Albert Muchanga, leads on matters relating to intra-African economic integration, and notably the AfCFTA negotiations in collaboration with other departments in the AUC.

About the AfroChampions Initiative

The AfroChampions Initiative is a public-private partnership designed to galvanize African resources and institutions to support the emergence and success of African private sector’s multinational champions in the regional and global spheres. The Initiative was founded by the advisory firm Konfidants; and is Co-Chaired by President Thabo Mbeki and Mr. Aliko Dangote, President and CEO of Dangote Group. The Initiative is headquartered in Accra, Ghana, and works with regional and global partners and governments, with the support of other corporate and institutional partners including ADS Group, the Djondo Fellowship, Olusegun Obasanjo Presidential Library and Thabo Mbeki Foundation. As a strategic platform within the Initiative, the AfroChampions Club, chaired by Mr Aliko Dangote, seeks to work with African governments to support policies and public-sector innovations that drive African economic integration, regional economic clusters and value chains.

www.afrochampions.com

About the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Côte d'Ivoire

The Ivory Coast Chamber of Commerce and Industry is a body that represents the interests of commercial, industrial and service companies, provides training for entrepreneurs and provides support to businesses. Its creation dates back to December 23, 1908 when the Governor General instituted by decree, in Grand-Bassam, the first Chamber of Commerce of Côte d'Ivoire. On May 17, 1963, the Chambers of Industry and the Chambers of Agriculture are organized separately by decree. However, the strong overlap between

industry and commerce led, on 8 January 1992, the Ivorian government to consolidate these activities in a single chamber under the supervision of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. The Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Côte d'Ivoire is currently chaired by Mr Faman Touré.

<http://www.cci.ci/3.0/votre-cci>

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