

AfroChampions Initiative and African Union start in Ghana their sensitization program on the African Continental Free Trade Area

Official Introduction of the AfroChampions Charter for Economic Integration

Accra, May 28, 2018 - The AfroChampions Initiative and the African Union have started their first roadshow to raise local entrepreneurs' awareness on the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) with a meeting in Accra, organized in partnership with the Association of Ghana Industries. Attendees included mostly Ghanaian entrepreneurs, operating in the manufacturing sector which should be boosted by the free movement of goods, services and people expected to result from the implementation of the AfCFTA Agreement.

"We are very pleased with these discussions with the Ghanaian business community," said His Excellency Albert Muchanga, AU's Commissioner for Trade and Industry. *"While we were able to present the opportunities offered by free movement of goods and services on the continent and the end of tariff and non-tariff barriers, we also received many questions and comments on the best schedule of actions to implement AfCFTA's protocols, challenges relating to the simplification of customs procedures or logistical infrastructures. This will inform our future reflections during the implementation phase of the AfCFTA agreement and we thank AGI for its support,"* he added.

Dr. Yaw Adu-Gyam fi, President of the AGI, was pleased that *"the roadshow started in Ghana, which, is, along with Kenya, the first country that deposited instruments to ratify the AfCFTA agreement"*. For him, *"it is very important that the African Union can receive suggestions from the private sector to ensure that the future AfCFTA is one that is aligned with the realities of the companies already involved in cross-border trade. We are happy to contribute to this dialogue between public decision-makers and economic players, which is a fairly new approach on our continent"*.

Speaking on behalf of the AfroChampions Initiative, which designed and financed this awareness-raising roadshow, Mr Kuseni Dlamini, Chairman of Massmart and member of the AfroChampions Club, highlighted *"the structuring role of intra-African trade for the development of the continent"* and presented the AfroChampions Charter for African economic integration. *"This Charter, developed by our team and with the support of the members of the Club AfroChampions, aims to translate the AfCFTA Agreement into positive actions: the signatories will thus commit to investing primarily on the continent, in sectors that are strategic for our economies, while developing African skills and helping Africa become a driver of global growth."*

After Ghana, the roadshow will continue in Côte d'Ivoire and 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.

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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 Association of Ghana Industries

The Association of Ghana Industries (AGI) is a voluntary business association of over 1200 members, made up of small, medium and large-scale manufacturing and services industries in agro-processing (food and beverages), agri-business, pharmaceuticals, electronics and electrical, telecommunications, information technology, utilities, service industries, transport, construction, textiles, garments and leather, banking and advertising. As the leading voice of manufacturing industries in the country, AGI is dedicated to: advocating policies that advance the growth and development of industries; facilitating international trade through exhibition of member products in countries across the sub-region; strengthening national industry associations through the sharing of knowledge, experience and critical information; providing members with a vast network of contacts, especially in the West African sub-region; hosting the industry and technology exhibition to promote members' goods.

<https://agighana.org/>

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