

AFRICAN LEADERSHIP FORUM 2023

PROMOTING INTRA-AFRICA TRADE TO UNLOCK
AGRICULTURAL POTENTIAL IN AFRICA

25 - 26 May, 2023 | Accra, Ghana



UONGOZI Institute

UONGOZI Institute is a public organisation under the Office of the President of the United Republic of Tanzania, seeking to promote the recognition of the important role of leadership in sustainable development in Tanzania and the wider continent.

The Institute applies a holistic and mutually reinforcing approach to capacity development which recognises that leadership competencies are developed through a continuous, lifelong learning process. Its two strategic pillars – leadership and sustainable development – are addressed through four main areas: executive education, policy dialogues, action-oriented research, and technical support.

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The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) is one of the flagship projects of Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want. It is a high ambition trade agreement, with a comprehensive scope that includes critical areas of Africa's economy, such as digital trade and investment protection, amongst other areas.

By eliminating barriers to trade in Africa, the objective of the AfCFTA is to significantly boost intra-Africa trade, particularly trade in value-added production and trade across all sectors of Africa's economy.

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AfCFTA



African Continental Free Trade Area Secretariat



African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Secretariat



afcftasecretariat

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AfDB	African Development Bank
AfCFTA	African Continental Free Trade Area
AFC	African Finance Corporation
Afreximbank	Africa Export-Import Bank
ALF	African Leadership Forum
AU	African Union
COP	Conference of the Parties [to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)]
EAC	East African Community
EU	European Union
FDI	Foreign direct investment
GDP	Gross domestic product
H.E.	His/Her Excellency
NBC	National Bank of Commerce (Tanzania)
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa’s Development
NGOs	Non-government organizations
ODA	Official development assistance
PPP	Public-private partnership
REC	Regional economic community
SACCOS	Savings and credit societies
SADC	Southern Africa Development Community
TADB	Tanzania Agriculture Development Bank
TDB	The Eastern and Southern African Trade and Development Bank
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
US	United States
US\$	United States dollar

INTRODUCTION

Africa is rich in resources. The continent is endowed with more than 50 percent of the world's remaining uncultivated arable land, vast untapped aquifers of freshwater and 30 percent of global mineral reserves. Most significantly, by 2030, the continent will have the world's largest and youngest workforce representing a massive demographic dividend. Household expenditure now exceeds US\$2 trillion and the continued rise in domestic incomes and consumption will fuel demand for food and other goods. With appropriate policies and adequate financing, Africa has the potential to become a global agricultural powerhouse.

However, the continent faces many challenges in translating its agricultural potential into sustainable development. Political instability in African states, COVID-19 related economic shocks, the Russia-Ukraine conflict, and the effects of climate change and extreme weather events have all contributed to increasing food insecurity. The [2022 Global Report on Food Crises](#) estimated that at least 140 million people in Africa face acute food insecurity, and the African Union's [Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Program \(CAADP\) 3rd Biennial Review Report 2015-2021](#) concluded that the continent is not on track to meet the goal of ending hunger by the year 2025.

Despite its abundant resources, Africa accounts for only 4 percent of global agricultural production, and consumption of many basic food commodities outstrips domestic production. Consequently, the continent is a net food importer. Since 2016, Africa has imported

around US\$90 billion in foodstuffs per year, and this is predicted to increase to US\$110 billion annually from 2025. For example, in 2020, Africa spent US\$13 billion to import 31 million tons of rice. This reliance on imports puts the continent's food supply at risk to exogenous shocks in trading partners.

To achieve food self-sufficiency and eliminate food insecurity, Africa will need to address the domestic (internal) and international (external) factors that historically and currently limit its agricultural production and productivity. Internal factors include lack of infrastructure, insufficient capital, limited skills, inputs and technology, and the absence of enabling national laws and policies to support the sector. External factors holding back the sector include restrictive trade policies and agreements, and lack of access to markets to incentivize investment in agricultural commodities and value chains.



AFRICA'S AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIVITY

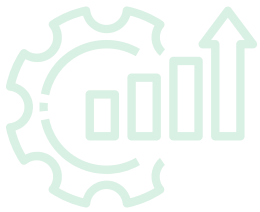
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Africa is endowed with more than 50 percent of the world's remaining uncultivated arable land



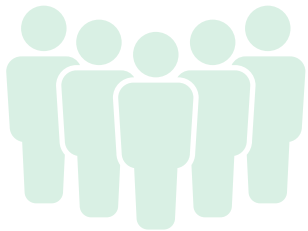
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The continent accounts for only 4 percent of global agricultural production



≥140 MILLION

At least 140 million people in Africa face acute food insecurity



\$90 BILLION

Estimated value of foodstuffs imported into Africa annually since 2016

\$110 BILLION

Projected value of food imports annually from 2025

\$13 MILLION TONS

Quantity of rice imported by Africa in 2020



The African Continental Free Trade Area

At present, Africa accounts for only 3 percent of global trade and intra-African trade is among the lowest of any region globally. In large part, the continent's current predicament is a legacy of the colonial economic model, which was characterized by small individual economies, fragmented and disconnected regional markets, over-reliance on the production and export of primary commodities, and low productive capacities and yields from predominantly subsistence smallholder farming.

Therefore, to overcome food deficits and food insecurity, it will be imperative for Africa to enable its smallholder farmers and rural communities to become an integral part of agricultural value chains and accelerate production and trade in agricultural commodities. Reducing barriers to trade between African countries will be critical in realizing the continent's agricultural potential. Through efficient cross-border trade, Africa will be able to ensure that countries that produce surplus food can export to other parts of the continent and reduce the need for imports.

The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) is the one of the flagship projects of African Union's Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want to transform the economy of the continent and achieve wealth and prosperity for its people. Signed by all 55 African countries in 2018, launched in July 2019, and in effect since January 2021, the AfCFTA is the world's largest free trade area. The mandate of the AfCFTA is to create a single continental market by eliminating trade barriers between African states to facilitate intra-Africa trade.

Agriculture and agro-processing is one of the four priority sectors identified by the AfCFTA to drive the industrial development of the continent, open up a huge market for goods produced in Africa, create job opportunities for its youth, and enable the continent to be self-sufficient in food.

To realize these goals, AfCFTA's protocols have been designed to address the unique challenges and problems faced by African countries as well as recognize the need to nurture infant industries and nascent sectors during the process of industrialization. The architecture of the AfCFTA also takes into account the processes of political and economic integration already in place on the continent. By incorporating regional configurations, the AfCFTA is building upon existing structures and agreements by member countries. What is required now is strong leadership from African governments and businesses to mainstream the AfCFTA at the national level. Coherent and complementary policies, strategies and actions are needed to unlock the Africa's agricultural potential as the foundation for the continent's economic transformation.



The launch of AfCFTA at the 10th Extraordinary Summit of the African Union in Kigali, March 2018.



AfCFTA is one of the flagship projects of African Union's Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want to transform the economy of the continent and achieve wealth and prosperity for its people. Its protocols have been designed to address the unique challenges and problems faced by African countries as well as recognize the need to nurture infant industries and nascent sectors during the process of industrialization.



From L-R: Mr. Kadari Singo, CEO of UONGOZI Institute; H.E. Koroma; H.E. Yayi, H.E. Obasanjo; H.E. Kikwete; H.E. Akufo-Addo; H.E. Mene; H.E. Marzouki; H.E. Jonathan; and H.E. Boshe.

The African Leadership Forum 2023

Against this background, the seventh African Leadership Forum (ALF) was convened by H.E. Dr. Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete, ALF Patron and former President of the United Republic of Tanzania, and H.E. Wamkele Mene, Secretary-General of the AfCFTA Secretariat. The two-day event was held in Accra, Ghana, on the 25th and 26th May 2023. As the guest of honour, H.E. Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, President of the Republic of Ghana, officially opened the event. The theme of the Forum was “Promoting intra-Africa trade to unlock agricultural potential in Africa”.

The Forum was co-organized by UONGOZI Institute and the AfCFTA Secretariat.

Delegates of the meeting included six former heads of state and government, as well as other distinguished leaders in government, business, academia and civil society from all parts of the continent (See Appendix A for the List of Delegates). The former heads of state in attendance were: H.E. Olusegun Obasanjo, Former President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria; H.E. Dr. Mohamed Moncef Marzouki, Former President of the Republic of Tunisia; H.E. Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, Former President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria; H.E. Thomas Boni Yayi, Former President of the Republic of Benin; H.E. Hailemariam Desalegn Boshe, Former Prime Minister of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia; and H.E. Dr. Ernest Bai Koroma, Former President of the Republic of Sierra Leone.

Rationale and objectives of ALF 2023

The Forum aimed to provide a space to share experiences and insights to facilitate increased agricultural trade among African countries. The key objectives of the Forum were to:

- 1 Highlight Africa's agricultural potential and opportunities emerging from climate change;
- 2 Share experiences and lessons on the obstacles (internal and international) in maximizing agricultural potential in Africa;
- 3 Discuss the potential and obstacles to, as well as practical and realistic requirements for, implementing AfCFTA within Africa's agriculture context; and
- 4 Identify priorities and a roadmap for implementation of the agricultural trade perspective under the AfCFTA to realize its transformative economic objective.

The event featured a plenary session followed by three closed thematic sessions; each with

introductions by expert presenters (See Appendix B for the Forum Agenda). Opening remarks were provided by President Kikwete and the keynote address was delivered by AfCFTA Secretary-General Mene. The topics of the thematic sessions were as follows:

- Session I discussed how to unlock Africa's agricultural potential;
- Session II examined the market as a driver for fostering agricultural productivity in Africa; and
- Session III deliberated on the role of Africa's partners to support the success of the AfCFTA.

As for previous forums, the three closed sessions of ALF 2023 were held under Chatham House Rules to encourage frank, open and in-depth discussion.

This report provides edited highlights of speeches, expert presentations, and plenary and panel discussions from all sessions.

PLENARY SESSION: PROMOTING INTRA-AFRICA TRADE TO UNLOCK AGRICULTURAL POTENTIAL IN AFRICA

To open proceedings, the moderator, Dr. Julie Gichuru, Head of Public Affairs and Communications, Mastercard Foundation, invited the Patron of the African Leadership Forum, H.E. President Kikwete to provide welcoming remarks.

Opening remarks by H.E. Dr. Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete, ALF Patron and Former President of the United Republic of Tanzania

On behalf of the former African Heads of State and Government in attendance and all participants to the Forum, President Kikwete thanked H.E. President Akufo-Addo for the warm reception and gracious hospitality accorded to delegates since arriving in the magnificent and historic city of Accra, for his kind agreement to host ALF 2023 in Ghana, and for allocating time from his busy schedule to personally attend the meeting.

A brief history of the African Leadership Forum

Continuing, President Kikwete gave a brief history of the African Leadership Forum. The ALF was established in 2014 with the objective of bringing together former and current African leaders to discuss and exchange ideas, share their experience and knowledge, and identify

sustainable solutions to address the socio-economic development challenges facing the continent.

The idea of establishing the ALF was hatched by three prominent former Presidents: His Excellency Olusegun Obasanjo, former President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, His Excellency Festus Mogae, former President of the Republic of Botswana, and His Excellency (the late) Benjamin Mkapa, former President of the United Republic of Tanzania. They were in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, in 2013, attending a symposium on “Shared Societies and Inclusive Sustainable Development”. The symposium was organized by the World Leadership Alliance, Club de Madrid, and UONGOZI Institute, a leadership institution based in Dar es Salaam. At the symposium, the three leaders agreed that African perspectives needed to be interrogated, analyzed, understood and expressed by Africans themselves. As a result, the ALF was created with President Mkapa serving as Patron and UONGOZI Institute as the Secretariat.

Since its inception, the Forum has played an important role in fostering candid dialogue on opportunities, challenges and solutions for Africa’s socio-economic needs and problems and how global developments impact the advancement of the African continent.



To date, the Forum has met six times, with each event focused on a different theme as follows:

- 1 Meeting the challenges of Africa’s transformation, held in 2014 in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania;
- 2 Moving towards an integrated Africa, held in 2015 in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania;
- 3 Enabling African business to transform the continent, held in 2016 in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania;
- 4 Peace and security for an integrated, united and sustainable Africa, held in 2017 in Johannesburg, South Africa;
- 5 Financing Africa’s transformation for sustainable development, held in 2018 in Kigali, Rwanda; and
- 6 Promoting good natural resources management for socio-economic transformation in Africa, held in 2019 in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

President Kikwete recounted that the seventh edition of the ALF under the theme of “Promoting intra-Africa trade to unlock agricultural potential in Africa” was supposed to be held in July 2020 in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. Unfortunately, the event was postponed due to the passing of President Mkapa on 24 July 2020, only a few days prior to the Forum’s scheduled opening. Then, over the next two years following President Mkapa’s death, efforts to hold the Forum stalled mainly due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. After the easing of pandemic, work to host the event was revived, and, hence, the gathering today.

ALF 2023

President Kikwete was pleased to relate that, in comparison with previous meetings, today’s Forum is the most attended with six former Heads of State and Government present. He acknowledged each in turn:

- 1 H.E. Olusegun Obasanjo, Former President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria;
- 2 H.E. Dr. Mohamed Moncef Marzouki, Former President of the Republic of Tunisia;
- 3 H.E. Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, Former President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria;
- 4 H.E. Thomas Boni Yayi, Former President of the Republic of Benin;
- 5 H.E. Hailemariam Desalegn Boshe, Former Prime Minister of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia;
- 6 H.E. Dr. Ernest Bai Koroma, Former President of the Republic of Sierra Leone.

He also expressed apologies on behalf of former Presidents of the Republic of Ghana, H.E. John Agyekum Kufuor and H.E. John Dramani Mahama, who were out of the country and unable to attend in person. H.E. Uhuru Kenyatta, former President of the Republic of Kenya had also promised to come. But unforeseeable matters cropped up at home so he had to call off his visit.

President Kikwete also expressed thanks to His Excellency Wamkele Mene, Secretary-General of the AfCFTA, for the pivotal role he played, both personally as co-convener and through the AfCFTA Secretariat as co-organizer with UONGOZI Institute, to make it possible for the Forum to be held in Accra.

He extended his compliments and appreciation to AfCFTA and UONGOZI Institute for a job very well done, and thanked all the presenters, moderators and rapporteurs for coming to share their insights and experience during sessions over the next two days. He added that Accra was the ideal venue for ALF 2023 given that the Forum’s principal theme on “promoting intra-Africa trade” is a hallmark responsibility of the AfCFTA, which is headquartered in the city.

So too, President Kikwete considered that the Forum’s focus upon “unlocking the agricultural potential in Africa” was opportune. He related that agriculture is the mainstay of the majority of people in Sub-Saharan Africa and the socio-economic backbone of most countries of the region. The sector is a vital source of food and raw materials, a major source of employment, and accounts for a large share of GDP and foreign exchange earnings. However, the sector has not been able to perform optimally due to many constraints. Therefore, discussing how to unlock Africa’s agricultural potential is the right thing to do.

He acknowledged the efforts being made by African governments, smallholder farmers and other stakeholders to transform the continent’s agriculture. Significant ground has been covered and a lot has been achieved. However, much more needs to be done for the agricultural sector to play its rightful role in the growth and development of African nations and well-being and prosperity of the people of Africa.

He said:

So far so good but it is not good enough as evidenced by the levels of poverty in rural areas, where many of our people live, and the never-ending reports of people who suffer from food shortages and hunger in Africa. Reports of Africa still spending huge sums of hard-earned forex importing food are not pleasant to hear. Likewise, reports that Africa is still exporting primary agricultural raw materials to the developed world and importing finished products [made] from the raw materials we exported.

He added that the success of this endeavour will require dedicated political will and investment, including investment in Africa’s people, especially smallholder farmers and young people, and investment in the continent’s organizations and institutions to ensure a favourable environment for doing business. Above all, investment is needed in the Africa’s long-term development agenda over short-term domestic priorities.

The Forum is also framed to acknowledge the contribution of the continent’s institutions— regional and international, governmental and non-governmental—in advancing this agenda and accelerating the process of Africa’s socio-economic transformation and ensuring that people’s aspirations for prosperity are met.

President Kikwete was gratified that policymakers, businesspeople and experts from all fields of socio-economic development were in attendance, and trusted that participants would feel free and open to share their experience and knowledge, provide recommendations, and suggest solutions on the important topic at hand. He thanked all for coming and wished the Forum good deliberations.

President Kikwete also extended his thanks to the partners whose contributions made the Forum possible. He gave special mention to NMB Bank, CRDB Bank, ASAS, the Tanzania Agriculture Development Bank, Superdoll, Kagera Sugar Limited, Mastercard Foundation, ComNet, Rahisi Ltd., NBC Bank Tanzania, Diamond Trust Bank Tanzania, Karibu Travel, and Vera Inter Travel.

In closing, President Kikwete invited delegates to watch a short video [tribute](#) to the late Benjamin William Mkapa, former President of Tanzania and the founding Patron of the ALF. He asked all to rise and observe a moment of silence in his honour.

“We are Africans. We are not Americans. We are not Europeans. We are not Japanese. There must be characteristics that define us in terms of our history, of our values. And we must transform without abandoning that uniqueness that makes us Africans. I would emphasize this especially for the youth. Because as the globe grows to be finer and closer, we tend to think about the superiority of more ancient countries or longer known countries, and we call ourselves new and developing countries. But that does not mean that we are in any deficient in values, in unity, in humanity. So don't model ourselves on the Americans, particularly culturally, and educationally and so on, or on the Europeans or any other. Let us find an African cultural base. Let us find an African aspirational base. Let us find the process of transformation, which strengthens our unity and reinforces our identity. That's what I would urge.”

— H.E. President Benjamin William Mkapa



H.E. Mkapa.

Keynote address by H.E. Wamkele Mene, Secretary-General, AfCFTA Secretariat

Following his salutations and thanks to President Akufo-Addo, former Presidents and high-level officials in attendance, Secretary-General Mene described the origins of the present Forum. He related that, in March 2020, just days after being sworn into his position at the AfCFTA, he was very surprised to receive a phone call from President Mkapa. Never having received a call from a head of state, he said that he rose from the chair he was sitting on and stood up as he spoke to the President.

President Mkapa told him that he wished to partner with the AfCFTA because he believed in the mission of the institution, to which he replied: Of course, I look forward to us working together. Days later, he received an invitation to the ALF in July 2020. Sadly, as President Kikwete has already related, that event did not happen due to the passing of President Mkapa. But, today, three years on, we have the opportunity to continue his legacy. For this, he expressed his gratitude to President Kikwete, President Obasanjo and the other former heads of states assembled here in Accra, not only to celebrate the vision of the Forum, but also to take stock of the progress made in the economic integration of Africa. He felt it was incredibly symbolic that the event was taking place in the city of Accra, in Ghana, a country that for decades has been at the vanguard of African unity and Pan-Africanism. The timing of the meeting, too, is auspicious, as 2023 marks the 60th anniversary of the founding of the Organization of African Unity, now the African Union (AU). Therefore, the AfCFTA Secretariat is honoured to convene this year's Forum with UONGOZI Institute.

To begin his address, Secretary-General Mene, provided a short overview of the geopolitical and economic context in Africa. He observed that ALF 2023 is convened at a time of widespread concern about multiple challenges confronting the continent. Notably, the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic since 2020 and the Russia-Ukraine conflict have worsened food insecurity through inflationary pressures on staple foods which have pushed up food costs across the continent. Millions of Africans have fallen back into poverty; the number of people experiencing food insecurity, at a moderate or severe level, is estimated to have increased from 512 million in 2014 to close to 800 million in 2021, or nearly 60 percent of Africa's population.

In 2020, over 20 million people and at least 10 million children faced severe food shortages due to crop failure and four consecutive dry seasons. The AU's [Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Program \(CAADP\) 3rd Biennial Review Report 2015-2021](#) concluded that Africa is not on track to meet the goal of ending hunger by the year 2025. Africa remains a net food importer. The continent's demand for commodities such as cereals, meats, dairy products, oils and sugar continues to outstrip domestic supply. According to the Food Agricultural Organization (FAO), Sub-Saharan Africa's food import bill was US\$ 50 billion in 2019, an increase of close to 2 percent from earlier years. The food import bill for the whole continent was estimated to be around US\$80 billion dollars per year in the period 2015 to 2017.



H.E. Mene delivers the keynote address.

In terms of international trade, the continent is highly dependent on extra-African sources of food and agricultural products. However, Secretary-General Mene said that there is no reason for the continent to be a net food importer. Africa has at least one-sixth of global plant species with many crops of African origin, including species of wheat, barley, maize meal and sorghum, 65 percent of the world's remaining uncultivated arable land, and 30 percent of its mineral reserves. Therefore, it is possible for the continent to be self-sufficient in food and to unlock job opportunities for young Africans in agriculture and agro-processing.

The necessity to accelerate intra-Africa trade in agricultural products

To achieve food self-sufficiency and eliminate food insecurity, Secretary-General Mene stressed the imperative for Africa to accelerate trade in basic agricultural products to enable its smallholder farmers and rural communities to be an integral part of the value chain of agricultural products. This is why the African Continental Free Trade Area is so critical. The AfCFTA Secretariat has prioritized agro-processing as one of the value chains that will drive and power industrial development, job creation and food security in Africa.

Increased trade will enable the continent to overcome its challenge of being a net food importer. Only through efficient cross-border trade can Africa ensure that countries that produce surplus food can export to other parts of the continent to overcome food deficits and food insecurity. Hence, ALF 2023 presents a very important opportunity to discuss ways to unlock agricultural potential in Africa and accelerate measures to dismantle barriers to intra-Africa trade in agricultural products.

To demonstrate that Africa does not need to depend on other parts of the world for food security, Secretary-General Mene described the partnership between AfCFTA and the Government of Zimbabwe to increase its strategic grain reserves by an additional 1 million metric tons from the current 500,000 metric tons per annum. This initiative will further enable Zimbabwe to reduce post-harvest losses over the whole value chain from field to food processing, saving the country up to US\$200 million yearly. He expressed his appreciation to the leadership of President Mnangagwa and his cabinet for ensuring that Zimbabwe is well positioned not only to feed the region of southern Africa, but also the entire continent.

In conclusion, Secretary-General Mene said that the continent does face immense challenges to ensure food security for its 1.3 billion people. But he reiterated that Africa has the capacity to feed itself and to create jobs in agriculture and agro-processing. Indeed, Africa has the capacity to export processed agricultural products to other parts of the world. He said that what had evaded the continent until now was an instrument to complement and implement existing policies of the African Union in the area of agriculture. That legal instrument is the AfCFTA. It has set ambitious targets for the reduction of tariffs and non-tariff barriers to enable the free flow and trade of agricultural products across the African continent.

Therefore, in the forthcoming session of the Assembly of Heads of States and Government in Addis Ababa in February next year, AfCFTA will provide a report of this Forum, and urge Africa leaders to take concrete action towards alleviating the food insecurity crisis on our continent. It will also urge the Heads of States, under the framework of the AfCFTA, to drastically accelerate the impact of the organization to provide opportunities in the agricultural industry and agro-processing.

He ended his speech by citing a very encouraging development which underscored the objective of the gathering today. Last year, with President William Ruto of Kenya, value-added agricultural products were identified for export under the rules of the AfCFTA from Kenya to Ghana. Through this initiative, the tea that was produced by smallholder farmers in Kenya, whom the government had organized into cooperatives, was exported not only to Ghana but to other parts of West Africa. This is a simple but remarkable story of how the AfCFTA is functioning. But more importantly, it is a remarkable story of how agriculture can contribute to trade. And a remarkable story of inclusivity; how smallholder farmers can now legitimately make a claim to contributing to intra-Africa trade.

In the forthcoming session of the Assembly of Heads of States and Government in Addis Ababa in February 2024, AfCFTA will provide a report of this Forum, and urge Africa leaders to take concrete action towards alleviating the food insecurity crisis on our continent.

Official opening by H.E. Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, President of the Republic of Ghana

Following salutations to the former Presidents and high-level officials in attendance, President Akufo-Addo, on behalf of the Government and people of Ghana, warmly welcomed participants to the seventh edition of the African Leadership Forum. Akwaaba! He believed that the choice of Ghana and its vibrant capital city of Accra to host the meeting reflected both its special place as a beacon of stable democratic governance in Africa and the warm hospitality of the Ghanaian people.

He observed that the Forum was being held at a critical period in history in Africa, which, like the rest of the world, is dealing with the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Hence, he applauded UONGOZI Institute of Dar es Salaam and the Secretariat of the African Continental Free Trade Area for convening the Forum at a time when all have come to the realization that no country can afford to go it alone, and that the people of Africa need to hasten the process of continental integration. He said:

We cannot allow our collective fate to be decided by exogenous shocks, thousands and thousands of miles away. The time is long overdue for Africa and Africans to define our own narrative. We must be defined by what we see in ourselves, and not what others choose to say about us. However, this cannot happen if we do not trade amongst ourselves.

President Akufo-Addo noted that Africa accounts for only 3 percent of global trade and intra-African trade is among the lowest of any region globally. This was largely due to the colonial

economic model characterized by small individual economies, fragmented and disconnected regional markets, over-reliance on the production and export of primary commodities, and the presence of low productive capacities—factors which have been in existence for the last century.

In contrast with this situation, he stressed that Africa’s strength lay in unity, strength lay in its numbers. Cumulatively, the 54 member states of the African Union have a population of 1.3 billion, the majority of whom are young people, and a collective GDP of US\$3 trillion which makes Africa the eighth largest economy in the world. This positions Africa as an extremely attractive investment destination. With the relevant investment, Africa will be able to sustain economic growth and create the job opportunities that the youth of the continent so desperately need.

The role of the AfCFTA

President Akufo-Addo considered that the AfCFTA was a game changer. Once fully realized, it had the potential to increase intra-African trade by US\$35 billion and reduce external imports by US\$10 billion yearly. It would provide more opportunities for the growth of small businesses and potentially lift 30 million people out of extreme poverty. Additionally, a successful AfCFTA would mean that Africa’s industrial exports will be diversified, thus moving away from undue reliance on extractive commodities and foreign imports. Indeed, possessing a third of the world's arable land, the potential of the continent to create prosperity for the 50 percent of Africans engaged in agriculture is immense.



H.E. Akufo-Addo officiates the event.

Quoting from the World Economic Forum, he said:

Agro-processing [has] exceptional potential for increasing intra-African trade, meeting local demand, accelerating GDP growth, creating new jobs, and improving inclusivity due to upstream and downstream linkages.[1]

To realize this goal, he stressed that Africa must, first of all, move away from being mere producers and exporters of raw agricultural produce to adding value to its production. Not only will countries be able to increase their earnings from agriculture, but also will position themselves to be able to deal with price hikes and shocks caused by global events. He was pleased to observe that many African countries had transitioned to this point. It will serve as a major economic boost for African women, the majority of whom make up the agricultural workforce. Unlocking Africa's agricultural potential will also help mobilize the requisite amount of financing needed to help develop the continent. Africa needs between US\$130 to 170 billion annually to bridge the continent's infrastructural gap and generate sustainable growth of at least 5 percent per year. This presents an exceptional opportunity for private sector investment.

President Akufo-Addo strongly believed that the AfCFTA can set the stage for Africa's industrialization and transformation. What is required now is for respective governments and businesses to show bold leadership. Coherent and complementary strategic actions are needed by governments and businesses—the right mix of policies and strategies for exports, value addition to raw commodities, and the greatest sense of

purpose to ensure robust intra-African trade to drive agricultural growth, economic diversification and the much-needed industrialization of the continent. He said:

We must consolidate the successes so far, and with a sense of urgency, develop the signature solutions needed to deepen intra-African trade, and spur impact investments needed to bring prosperity to the continent, and her people. And we must do this with fearless determination. Then we shall put Africa to work and repudiate the recent culture of failure. We shall then take our rightful place in the world, especially if we achieve the difficult target of silencing the guns without which we cannot achieve or attain our objectives of building a free, prosperous, democratic, united Africa governed by the rule of law, respect for human rights and the principles of democratic accountability. May God bless the African Leadership Forum, Mother Africa, and us all.

He declared the African Leadership Forum duly opened.

1 World Economic Forum and AfCFTA. 2023. *AfCFTA: A New Era for Global Business and Investment in Africa*. p. 11.



From L-R: H.E. Mene, H.E. Boshe, H.E. Obasanjo, H.E. Akufo-Addo, H.E. Kikwete, and Ms. Gichuru.

Plenary discussion

Moderator

Dr. Julie Gichuru, Head of Public Affairs and Communications, Mastercard Foundation

Panelists

- H.E. Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, President of the Republic of Ghana
- H.E. Dr. Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete, ALF Patron and Former President of the United Republic of Tanzania
- H.E. Olusegun Obasanjo, Former President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria
- H.E. Hailemariam Desalegn Boshe, Former Prime Minister of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
- H.E. Wamkele Mene, Secretary-General of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Secretariat

Expert presenter

Mr. Abdulmajid Nsekela, Group CEO and Managing Director, CRDB Bank Plc

A panel discussion followed the official opening by President Akufo-Addo during which delegates candidly contributed their experiences and ideas to overcome the major challenges in promoting intra-Africa trade in agricultural products. Key messages that emerged from the discussions are summarized in the sections below. To set the context for discussions, the moderator invited Mr. Abdul Majid Nsekela, Group CEO and Managing Director, CRDB Bank of Tanzania to give a brief presentation.

Expert presentation by Mr. Abdulmajid Nsekela, Group CEO and Managing Director, CRDB Bank of Tanzania

To begin his remarks, Mr. Nsekela said he was honoured to be part of the 2023 African Leadership Forum and share his insights on promoting intra-Africa trade to unlock the potential of the agricultural sector. Despite the continent's growing population, intra-Africa trade remains low compared to other regions and the market is highly fragmented. The AfCFTA aims to address these issues by creating the world's largest free trade area, removing tariff and non-tariff barriers, and boosting intra-Africa trade. Integration will boost the economic development and accelerate the continent's efforts to eradicate poverty and achieve its ambitions for sustainability.

Why is this topic so important in our continent? First, Africa holds more than half of the world's arable land and is blessed with abundant water resources. Yet, the continent cannot produce enough food to feed itself. The continent's current contribution to global agricultural production of 4 percent falls well short of its capacity. It is time to tap into the sector's potential and maximize benefits for its people. Second, each year, the continent spends almost US\$90 billion importing foods yet one in every five Africans goes to bed hungry.

It is undeniable that the continent faces unique challenges and pitfalls: inadequate infrastructure, limited capital and a lack of enabling policies have all impeded intra-Africa trade, hindering the realization of its agricultural potential. Moreover, climate change poses a significant threat.

To overcome these challenges and drive agricultural productivity and efficiency, the continent must prioritize technological advancement, optimize resources in each country by leveraging digital innovations, encourage knowledge transfer, create enabling policies and adopt sustainable farming practices. Political goodwill from Africa’s leaders will also be required to drive this ambition forward.

A multi-stakeholder approach

Mr. Nsekela stressed that unlocking intra-Africa trade in the agricultural sector is not a one-man show. It requires a multiple-stakeholder approach, bringing together the private sector, the political class and international partners. The banking sector has played an important role in this area. Banks have been at the forefront of supporting agriculture, not only by providing a range of innovative financial services but also by improving the financial literacy of farmers. However, at the same time, the banking sector has faced challenges, such as limited credit information, inadequate collateral options and high default rates in the agricultural sector. Banks, such as CRDB Bank in Tanzania, have taken positive steps through the adoption of emerging trends, including environmental, social and governance principles. By integrating sustainability practices within their operations, financial institutions set an example for responsible banking that aligns with goals of unlocking intra-Africa trade and promoting sustainable agriculture.



Mr. Nsekela believed that financial institutions in Africa are ready to take this agenda forward, but it will only be possible through collaborative efforts within and between countries. Policymakers and the private sector will need to work together to develop solutions to address challenges in the agricultural sector. Raising sufficient funding for the sector is one fundamental challenge. Up until now, funds have been sourced internationally from the World Bank and other institutions. But African countries now have strong financial sectors and through strategic collaboration, funding could be raised through syndicated loans.

To guide deliberation on the topic, Mr. Nsekela posed six fundamental questions for the esteemed panellists to consider.

- 1 How can technological advancement and resource optimization drive intra-Africa trade and unlock agricultural potential, ensure sustainability and maximize productivity?
- 2 In the face of climate change, how can African nations adapt, mitigate risk and seize opportunities for agricultural growth, while promoting resilient food security?
- 3 What strategies/measures can be implemented to enhance intra-Africa trade, for example, fostering competition, innovation and collaboration while overcoming challenges in infrastructure and trade barriers?
- 4 How can the banking sector continue to support the agricultural sector? What specific challenges are faced in providing financial services to farmers and agribusiness? Agriculture is the biggest sector but political factors with respect to small farmers also need to be considered in any policy changes.

5 As the continent strives for sustainability, what efforts can be made to integrate environmental, social and governance principles into the banking sector to support agriculture, ensuring responsible practices that align with the goal of intra-Africa trade stability and development?

6 Does sufficient political goodwill exist to drive this agenda forward?

Undeniably, unlocking Africa’s agriculture potential requires synchronizing policies, adapting to climate change, leveraging the opportunities that the AfCFTA provides, maximizing support from Africa’s partners, and having a robust banking sector (both commercial banks and non-commercial bank/investment banks). But Mr. Nsekela believed that by implementing appropriate measures, Africa could transform agriculture, boost intra-Africa trade and drive sustainable development across the continent.

He encouraged Forum delegates to engage in dynamic discussion, challenge the status quo, and collaborate toward a future where Africa’s agricultural potential can be realized. He said:

Our farmers need to thrive. Our continent needs to flourish...As the old adage goes, “If we want to go far, go together.” Let us work together to address this important journey and transform Africa.

Panel discussion

The moderator, Dr. Gichuru directed the first question to Secretary-General Mene. Reflecting upon the issues raised by Mr. Nsekela in his introduction, Dr. Gichuru put forward that Africa had been talking about this agenda for decades, that these questions are not new to Africa but can be traced back to Kwame Nkrumah and Julius Nyerere. Hence, she asked why this is the moment that Africa can make this happen, to truly transform the situation and the continent? And what do stakeholders need to do this time to really make a difference?

Economic integration of the continent

In response, Secretary-General Mene agreed that the socio-economic transformation of the continent has evaded the continent for too long. Undoubtedly, there have been significant successes since the establishment of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in May 1963 in Addis Ababa, especially the political unification of the continent, liberation from colonial powers, and the defeat of apartheid in South Africa.

However, what remains to be accomplished is the economic integration of the continent. However, he strongly believed that, right now, Africa has a unique opportunity for positive change. As at this time, 47 countries have ratified the agreement to establish the AfCFTA, representing unprecedented political will and political commitment to the economic integration of the continent. And that is why, in less than five years, the AfCFTA has made so much progress. However, he added that the Forum's theme today was absolutely critical to build on the achievements to date. If Africa does not unlock opportunities in agriculture, create jobs, feed Africa, the continent will not succeed.

No country in the world has developed without the agricultural sector as a pillar of growth.

How will trade liberalization be able to include smallholder farmers in a continental value chain? For example, China was successful in bringing over 700 million smallholder farmers into the agricultural value chain to feed that country in less than one generation. With the political will at present, Secretary-General Mene believed that Africa has the opportunity to position agriculture and agro-processing as the driver of food security and job creation in Africa and to ensure that the continent is globally competitive. But he felt that this opportunity will not come again. If the continent misses this particular chance, it's difficult to see it would get another.

The experience of Ethiopia in transforming agriculture

The moderator directed her next question to Prime Minister Desalegn. What lessons can be drawn from the Ethiopian journey and experience with respect to transforming agriculture for what now needs to be done to unlock Africa's agricultural potential through the AfCFTA? To begin, Prime Minister Desalegn wished to highlight the positive things taking place in agriculture in Africa, for example, the transformation in rice production in rural Ghana, the rice programme supported by the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA), and other initiatives not only in Ethiopia but also in Tunisia, Egypt, Morocco and South Africa. He considered that best practices were to be found all over Africa that could be scaled up. Specifically, Ethiopia has adopted a cluster approach for the commercialization of agriculture and has developed new technologies through its research and development organizations that are yet to be utilized.

The continent does not need to go elsewhere to improve its agriculture. Rather African countries need to come together to share lessons and best practices to improve their individual and collective productive capacities. Prime Minister Desalegn reiterated the observation of Secretary-General Mene that the continent necessarily had to invest in agriculture as the basis for its development; no continent had moved up to the next step of economic development without dealing with agriculture first. Therefore, agriculture needs to be prioritized by policymakers. The whole food system and whole agricultural value chain needs to work to withstand global shocks, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, Ukraine-Russia conflict and climate change.

Trade will be crucially important. Prime Minister Desalegn considered that AfCFTA was one of the landmark decisions taken by African leaders and it should be implemented in good spirit and with political leadership and goodwill. Additionally, the continent can address its deficits, especially in infrastructure, through the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). With respect to international aid, he recommended that development partners should support African countries through investments in countries' productive capacities rather than via food or emergency aid. To end hunger, Africa has to invest in its agriculture and there are best practices already across the continent that can be emulated.

The continent needs to focus upon agribusiness not agriculture

President Obasanjo agreed with Prime Minister Desalegn that Africa is on the way, but not there yet. He strongly recommended that the discussion should focus on the broad concept of agribusiness not narrowly on agriculture.

He said:

I believe we should stop talking of agriculture. We should be talking of agribusiness. When you talk of agribusiness, you take everything together. Agriculture was what [was] given to you by colonialism, not agribusiness. Agribusiness takes the value chain—from land preparation up to the food on the table. And that is what we should now be talking about. I do not want to continue producing crops or product that will have to go to Europe to add value and [then be] brought back here.

To illustrate his point, President Obasanjo briefly described the situation in the cocoa industry. He said that countries in West and Central Africa produced more than 75 percent of the world's cocoa. Yet cocoa produced in Ghana has to go to Europe to be made into chocolate. He said:

Kenya does not produce cocoa, but they eat chocolate. South Africa does not produce cocoa, but they eat chocolate. Why can't the cocoa we produce in Ghana, in Cote d'Ivoire, be turned to chocolate and be sent to Kenya, to Tanzania, to South Africa, without going to Switzerland. Now, that is where...my idea about agribusiness comes in.

Later in the discussion, President Akufo-Addo spoke further on the issue of cocoa, which is one of Ghana's principal exports. Ghana is the world's second largest producer of cocoa beans after Cote d'Ivoire. Historically, the entire value chain of the cocoa industry was located outside of the country. However, this situation is changing. He said some younger Ghanaian entrepreneurs have established companies in the cocoa industry. For example, the Ghanaian company, Niche Cocoa, not only produces chocolate for the domestic Ghanaian market, but also has established an outlet in the United States to produce chocolate for that market. Overall, around 40 percent of the cocoa produced in Ghana is now processed locally.

Agribusiness is multisectoral

President Obasanjo also reasoned that the concept of agribusiness is necessarily multisectoral in contrast to the more silo-based focus on agriculture.

When you talk about agribusiness, you are bringing all the ministries, all the departments, all the agencies together. Because you cannot talk of agribusiness without talking of finance. You cannot talk of agribusiness without talking of industry. You cannot talk of agribusiness without talking of trade, which we are talking about. But when you talk of agriculture, you tend to leave it to Ministry of Agriculture. The Ministry of Agriculture is very important but so is the Ministry of Finance.

Financing agribusiness

Continuing his remarks, President Obasanjo highlighted the prohibitive interest rates that banks charge for loans for agribusiness. In his home country of Nigeria, he said that a farming business would be lucky to get a loan from a commercial bank with an interest rate of 20 percent. He quipped:

With the rate of 20 percent for an agri-loan or agribusiness loan, you have to be producing cocaine to be able to make a profit...It is ridiculous to the extreme to say that you are promoting agriculture, and you expect your farmers to go and get a loan at the rate of anything more than single digits. They will not be able to make it. And that is the truth.

Indeed, during his tenure as President of Nigeria, it took six years to secure finance from the African Development Bank (AfDB).

Later in the discussion, he described an initiative undertaken during his tenure as President, whereby the Central Bank of Nigeria provided a guarantee for loans to agriculture of up to 75 percent. He said this scheme had worked but is no longer operational.

He also related a story of visiting a poultry farm on a trip to Turkiye. The farm was fully automated and produced 1 million eggs per day with only 15 employees. Upon his enquiry, the owner of the farm told him that the establishment cost US\$40 million but 50 percent of this sum was received through a government grant. The owner asked if the President could assist his enterprise to start exporting eggs to Nigeria. He replied:

Not on your life! But the point is this. There is no Nigerian poultry farmer producing eggs that will be able to compete with him. Because we don't get any grant. Again, Africa's leaders too should understand and be able to say, 'Look, if this is the problem, how do we confront it?'

President Akufo-Addo strongly agreed with President Obasanjo that finance represented a major roadblock to the development of the agricultural sector. He said that one of the biggest challenges of his government has been working out how to channel the flow of resources in the banking system from investing in [commercial] paper and in industry to supporting agriculture or the agribusiness sector. He acknowledged that these sectors have inherent risks but financing agricultural activity is absolutely critical, not least because Ghana had been literally built by farmers, specifically cocoa farmers. Ghana's development for the whole of the last century has been largely financed by the cocoa sector.

But finding the solution for generating resources to support agribusiness remains a major challenge. Due to this gap in financing, President Akufo-Addo said that his government had to turn to a system of subsidies for farmers paid from public resources. Planting for Food and Jobs is one of the country's flagship agricultural programmes. Under this initiative, Ghana's smallholder farmers are provided with subsidies to purchase inputs, such as seedlings and fertilizer. Without a doubt, it has yielded positive results. But President Akufo-Addo acknowledged there is a limit on the public subsidy of agriculture. Hence, Africa needs to look very seriously at the past and how another financial ecosystem can be developed that will enable resources to be channelled into financing agribusiness.

President Kikwete, an agricultural economist by profession, also commented on the problem of securing finance for agriculture. He recalled a meeting during his tenure as the Tanzanian Minister of Finance with the National Bank of Commerce (NBC), Tanzania's only commercial bank at that time. During the meeting, he had spoken about the possibility of NBC extending loans to the agricultural sector, but upon its conclusion, the managing director of NBC advised him to forget about loans to farmers as they were too risky.

He also noted that, his predecessor, President Mkapa, had created a programme like Ghana's which provided input subsidies to farmers, because Africa's agriculture cannot be transformed if its farmers continued to use hand hoes and traditional seeds, and were not able to access fertilizers, herbicides and pesticides, or irrigate their crops. He said that during his term in office, he trebled the money to this programme, but Tanzania was not able to source enough funds to subsidize all of its farmers.



A cocoa farmer showcases his product in Diaso, Ghana. Photo credit: Flickr | Stephen Duncan

Hence, the subsidy programme was not a sufficient mechanism to raise people out of poverty or ensure the country’s food security.

Given the limitations in funding through subsidies, in 2008, President Kikwete came up with the idea to establish the Tanzania Agricultural Development Bank (TADB), a financial institution dedicated to extending loans to farmers. Tanzania also has a system of savings and credit societies (SACCOS) to provide loans to smallholder farmers in rural areas. SACCOS has enabled farmers to borrow without the same need for collateral required by banks. President Kikwete said that the repayment rate on these loans has been quite good, largely because these institutions operate locally. Still, not enough is being done. A flexible, innovative financial ecosystem needs to be established by African banks to create a huge loan portfolio for farmers, youth and women. Africa needs to find a way to provide seed capital and mentor young people so their ideas can be translated into something tangible and successful. He said: “If we can really unlock that one, we will be able to do much better.”

“A flexible, innovative financial ecosystem needs to be established by African banks to create a huge loan portfolio for farmers, youth and women. Africa needs to find a way to provide seed capital and mentor young people so their ideas can be translated into something tangible and successful.”

— H.E. Dr. Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete

Later in the discussion, Prime Minister Desalegn praised the initiative of the Tanzanian government under Her Excellency President Samia Suluhu Hassan called Building a Better Tomorrow-Youth Initiative for Agribusiness (BBT-YIA). He said that the programme was designed intentionally to encourage young people into agriculture. The programme is digitally driven and financially inclusive, land is allocated and technological support is provided. He considered the programme to be exemplary and a model which could be expanded across the continent.

The role of the private sector

On a closely related issue, Prime Minister Desalegn said that the involvement of the private sector would be essential for the implementation of the AfCFTA and the broader development of the continent. Therefore, political leadership will be required to put in place a conducive environment for business to foster the dynamism of the private sector in Africa.

Infrastructure to support agribusiness and intra-Africa trade

In his remarks, President Obasanjo also touched upon the vital need for improvements in infrastructure to support intra-Africa trade. If a coastal shipping system was put in place, for example, along the east coast from Cairo to the Cape and on the west coast from Algiers to West Africa, he believed that intra-Africa trade could be increased by at least 10 percent. To illustrate the present dilemma, he related a story of a trip he made to Angola. When he enquired what products Nigeria could trade with Angola, he was told that Angola would be glad to import Indomie instant noodles that were produced in Nigeria. Upon returning to Nigeria, he investigated the available options for transportation to facilitate this trade between the two countries.

Air was too expensive. But upon checking the possibilities for shipping from the Port of Calabar in Nigeria, he was informed that the only ships available were smuggling ships, which was clearly not an appropriate form of transportation for official intra-country trade. He believed that the continent would do well to improve its coastal shipping services and he considered that not much needed to be done to achieve this outcome.

Here again, Prime Minister Desalegn stressed the potential of the African private sector to collaborate with global infrastructure developers to build the infrastructure that the continent needs.

Division of labour in Africa

President Obasanjo also proposed a “regional division of labour in agribusiness.” For example, West Africa could focus on producing cocoa, maize, rice and cassava, while Ethiopia and countries in the Horn of Africa could focus on producing wheat for Africa. The Great Lakes region can produce fish (like smoked and dried tilapia) and Southern and Eastern Africa can produce beef and milk, beer and wine. He was not suggesting that countries would not continue to produce other staples and products for their domestic markets, but individual states or geographical areas could specialize in a select number of commodities for export to other African states. He said:

There's no earthly reason why we should be spending \$90 billion a year on the importation of food.

Roadblocks to intra-Africa trade

Asked by the moderator to identify the present roadblocks to intra-Africa trade, Secretary-General Mene replied:

What's clear is that the easiest part is negotiating the rules that will enable the trade to happen. What's more difficult is trade finance, and establishing the supply chain networks that will enable the goods to move across borders.

Most importantly, Africa’s development finance institutions—African Development Bank (AfDB), Africa Finance Corporation (AFC), the Eastern and Southern African Trade and Development Bank (TDB), Africa Export-Import Bank (Afreximbank)—need to be asked the big questions: How can their balance sheets be structured so as de-risk loans to smallholder farmers? How can they make their capital available to support local banks and reduce the cost of money? How can they support commercial banks locally in every country or district, so that local banks/savings and cooperative societies can make trade finance affordable for cross-border trade? He said:

Until we address this question of access to finance, we will succeed in reducing and eliminating the legal barriers, the market will be open, but the goods will not flow.

The second challenge is how does the continent establish supply chain networks to enable trade in agricultural commodities; for example, for beef to move from Botswana to West Africa, for milk to move from Uganda to North Africa, for chocolate to move from West to Southern Africa. At present, many countries in West Africa import commodities from outside the continent, because it's cheaper to import beef or cotton from another part of the world via global trade routes and also due to the agricultural subsidies that distort global markets.

Supply chain networks—air, rail, road and sea—are essential for intra-Africa trade to become a reality. Otherwise, Africa will forever be importing from other parts of the world because it's easier and cheaper to do so.

Later in the discussion, President Obasanjo advised that if the three continental development banks—AfDB, AFC and Afreximbank—were brought together with the governors of central banks in Africa, solutions to the continent's finance challenges would be found.

Avoiding the new economic scramble for Africa

Another question posed by the moderator to the esteemed panel was how Africa was going to navigate the present economic scramble for Africa's resources and for access to the continent's vast market. Introducing this topic, Dr. Gichuru said:

We are living in an incredibly dynamic time. Africa is well positioned...but there are a lot of global pressures...pulling us in one direction or another and pulling us away from our dream of a united and open continent. How do we navigate through this current season to ensure that we're not going into an economic scramble for Africa, where we get dazzled by things being offered here or there and do not pay attention to our African Continental Free Trade Area and our opportunities to build up ourselves together.

In response, Prime Minister Desalegn stressed the overarching need for political leadership and political will; Africa's leaders must recognize that the more united the continent, the stronger. However, beyond that he said that practical measures must be implemented to integrate the continent.

For example, implementation of the AU's Program Infrastructure Development for Africa (PIDA) needs to be expedited with the involvement of multilateral financial institutions. Regional integration, for example, through entities such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the East African Community (EAC) is also very important to help connect the dots that are not connected.

President Obasanjo agreed with Prime Minister Desalegn on the importance of political will. But he emphasized that political will must be complemented by political action. He was encouraged that 47 out of 54 African countries had already joined the AfCFTA, which he believed was an unprecedented amount of African political action. But he added that Africa had no choice. The stark reality is that it is in the interest of outside countries to divide the continent. He counselled:

We shouldn't just bury our head in the sand. It's [in] their interest to divide us. Now, we have what they want...And if they can get it free, they will get it free. If they can get it by dividing, they will divide us and get it. If they can get it even by eliminating us, they will eliminate us and get it. Now, if we understand that, it is now up to us to guard what we have.

To take one example, he said that African countries (Democratic Republic Congo, Zambia and Madagascar) have over 70 percent of the world's reserves of cobalt, an essential metal used in the production of batteries for electric cars and for many other industrial uses. Western industries need and want this resource, the Chinese military also. Therefore, the continent, including its development banks, has either to seize the opportunity to preserve these resources collectively for Africa and make them available to the world on its own terms or risk them being exploited on their terms.

President Kikwete agreed. He counselled that Africa must understand its interests vis-à-vis outside interests.

If these interests coincide with their interest, then that's fine. But if they don't, we should not be forced to abandon our interest in favour of their interest. I think that is suicidal. And that will not take us anywhere.

President Akufo-Addo was of the same mind. He said:

I think there was a British statesman some time ago in the 19th century, who made the statement that his country doesn't have permanent friends, it only has permanent interests.[2] And I think that this is the philosophy that should guide us, that, we don't have permanent friends, we have permanent interests, which is about what we want in the world. And that our response to everybody is guided by what we want in the world, how we see our own development, how we can assert more control over our own resources, how we can develop the societies that we want. And if we, if our mindset is there, that what matters for us are our interests, the rest finds its way of fitting in. I've always been guided by that statement: "We don't have permanent friends. We have permanent interests"...and it is those permanent interests, that we should be pushing, and advocating, advancing all the time.

2 Lord Palmerston 1784–1865 British statesman; Prime Minister, 1855–8, 1859–65 “We have no eternal allies, and we have no perpetual enemies. Our interests are eternal and perpetual, and those interests it is our duty to follow.” Speech, House of Commons, 1 March 1848. See: <https://www.oxfordreference.com/display/10.1093/acref/9780191826719.001.0001/q-oro-ed4-00008130>

The path to African integration

In their final remarks to the plenary, the panelists all emphasized the critical importance of continued integration—political and commercial—to drive the implementation of the AfCFTA and the continent's sustainable development.

Secretary Mene asked the audience to consider the historical experience of the European Union, which started 72 years ago with only six countries under the European Coal and Steel Community and is, today, the most competitive economic integration model in the world with a single monetary union. This is what Africa's independence leaders envisaged seven decades ago. He said:

We have to remain on this path of integration. It is going to be difficult; it is going to be daunting. There may, at times, be temptations to withdraw and look inward at national interests. But we have to remain on the path... We are not yet there. But we're on the path. We've started the journey.

Prime Minister Desalegn concurred.

We have to learn from history...The more Balkanized we are, we cannot succeed in global competition. Africa has to come together. And I think this is a big opportunity for us, in the African Continental Free Trade Area, to be implemented in letter and spirit.

Most importantly and urgently, for the goals of the AfCFTA to be realized, the continent has to act to build its productive capacity so that Africa has things to trade. Without productive capacity, the integration and development of the continent becomes wishful thinking.

President Obasanjo reiterated the need for African countries to know, protect and guard its interests, not just individually but collectively as a continent. He quoted the old saying:

If you want to walk fast, go alone, but if you want to go far, go together. I believe we have to go fast and go together. We have to go fast. And we have to go far...Because we cannot afford to be left behind.

President Kikwete gave his personal commitment that he would continue to advance the integration of the continent. He expressed his belief:

If we can drive the African integration agenda successfully, everything else would be easy on the African continent.

Closing the plenary, President Akufo-Addo expressed his vision of a resilient, self-reliant Ghana and a united, prosperous Africa:

There's an expression, a mantra we are using here in Ghana, to define our future, which is to create a Ghana beyond aid. That continues to be the focus of all that we're trying to do here, to build a country which is resilient, which is self-reliant. And therefore, is dependent on itself, in terms of its development of human capital, the way in which it expresses wealth, the way in which it builds, and on its population. All of these are being done within the context of a country that has a vision for its own development. And that vision feeds into the larger African vision of a united continent. We have a lot to do with the whole Pan-African idea. Our first leader was one of the most articulate promoters of the idea and it is something that is now part and parcel of the Ghanaian political fabric. So, moving on that and making sure that, indeed, we can arrive at that goal. That's a major commitment.

There is a need for African countries to know, protect and guard its interests, not just individually but collectively as a continent.



Participants during the plenary session.

SESSION I: UNLOCKING AFRICA’S AGRICULTURAL POTENTIAL

Despite its huge reserves of arable land, Africa’s consumption of food commodities outstrips its production. Consequently, the continent currently imports around US\$90 billion in foodstuffs annually, and this is expected to increase to US\$110 billion by 2025. To examine how the continent can reverse this trend, the Forum’s first thematic session examined how the continent can unlock its agricultural potential to better ensure food security for its rapidly growing population.

The session featured an introductory [video](#) and address on the Common African Agro-Parks (CAAPs) initiative by Dr. Anselme Vodounhessi, Programme Coordinator (CAAPs) at the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA), followed by a panel discussion with H.E. Mohamed Moncef Marzouki, former President of the Republic of Tunisia and H.E. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, former President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Expert presentation by Dr. Anselme Vodounhessi, Programme Coordinator, Common African Agro-Parks (CAAPs), The Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA)

Africa’s unlimited agricultural potential

To commence his address, Dr. Vodounhessi summarized the current context in Africa as a foundation for his remarks on how the CAAPs programme will help to transform the continent’s agricultural sector.

Most significantly, he said that the population of the continent is projected to almost double from 1.3 billion people presently to 2.5 billion in 2050. By 2030, the continent will have the world’s largest and youngest workforce representing a massive demographic dividend, while the populations of other continents will be stagnant. At the same time, he cautioned that Africa has to create decent jobs and opportunities for its young people otherwise as President Obasanjo’s has warned: “If we don’t treat them well, they’ll become the next al-Shabaab”.

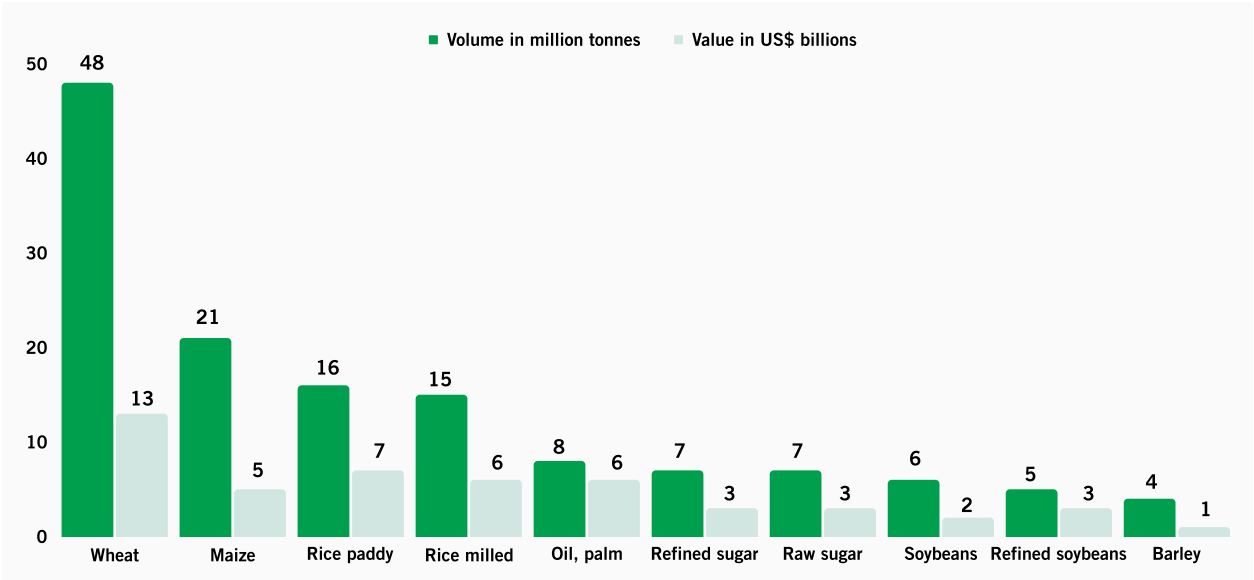
Other favourable trends include:

- Household consumption of US\$2.1 trillion. Increasing incomes on the continent are fuelling greater demand and supply for food and other goods as well as improvements in quality.
- Africa has more than 50 percent of the world’s uncultivated arable land as well as water and substantial reserves of natural resources.
- billion, a sum nine times greater than foreign assistance and the AfDB reported that Africa’s pension funds had assets totalling US\$260 billion in 2010. Therefore, the continent has both the people and the capital to invest in its development.

The problem of imports

However, Dr. Vodounhessi acknowledged that the continent faces many challenges in translating this enormous potential into sustainable development. One of the biggest problems that needs to be addressed is the continent’s growing reliance on food imports. Since 2016, Africa has imported around US\$90 billion in foodstuffs, and this is predicted to be US\$110 billion every year from 2025. This is happening because Africa’s consumption of many basic food commodities, such as rice, maize and wheat, is outstripping production. Figure 1 shows the top 10 agricultural commodities imported by Africa in 2020.

Figure 1: Top 10 imported agricultural crops in Africa, 2020



For example, in 2020, Africa spent US\$13 billion to import 31 million tons of rice. In other words, the continent is not producing enough food to feed its population. This also means that the continent’s food supply is vulnerable to shocks to trading partners. Recently, the conflict between Ukraine and Russia has led to trade disruptions and large price hikes, particularly for wheat, which have severely impacted public budgets and household spending. In addition, the continent is not adding value to its food exports; Africa largely exports raw agricultural products not processed foods. For example, Africa accounts for 75 percent of global production of cocoa beans valued at US\$11.5 billion in 2021 but far greater value would be accrued if the cocoa was processed in Africa.

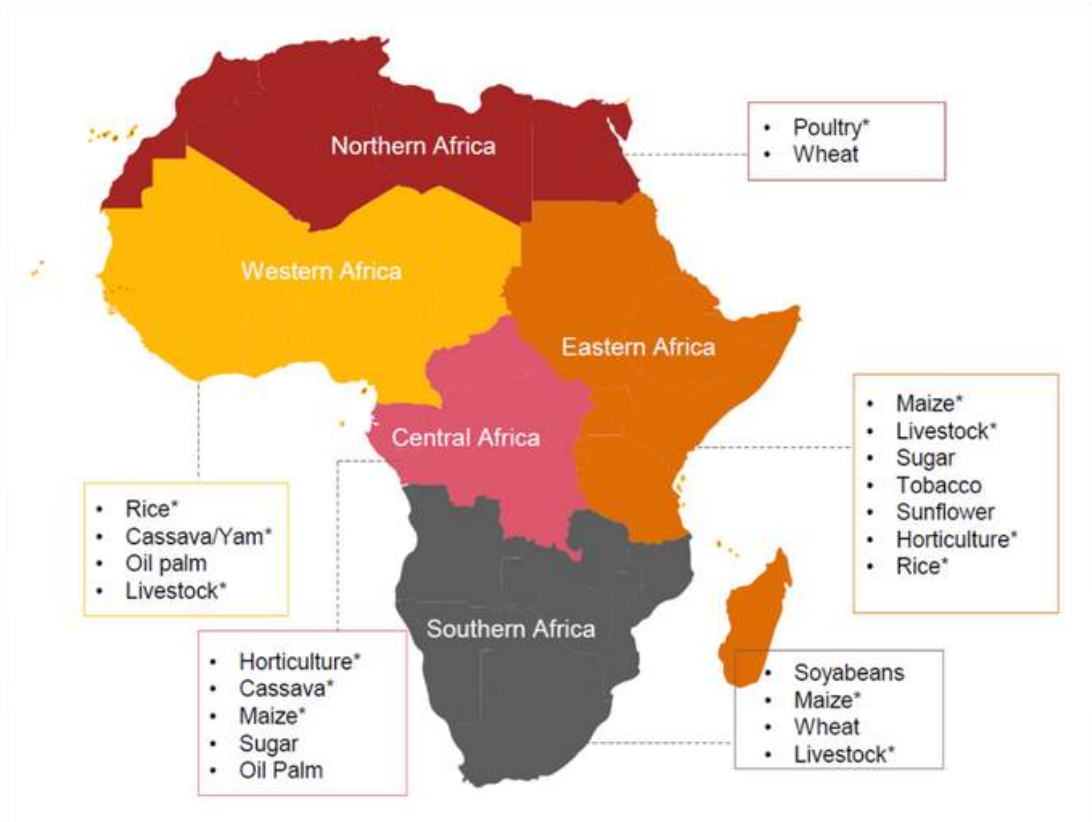
Reducing barriers to facilitate trade between African countries will be critical to realizing the continent’s agricultural potential. Hence, the creation of the AfCFTA is a game changer.

Common African Agro-Parks

The Common African Agro-Parks is continent-wide initiative to transform agriculture in Africa. Dr. Vodounhessi described that the CAAPs programme plans to create transboundary mega agro-industries to increase food reserves and establish food supply corridors to enable all producers on the continent to get their products to African markets.

The plan is to have five zones on the continent; one zone in each geographical area, and each zone will specialize in the development of specific commodities based on their suitability and competitiveness to produce those crops. Research is being undertaken to determine the best commodities in each zone. Selections will be guided by comprehensive studies on the production and importation patterns on the continent. Figure 2 illustrates the regional distribution of key crops based on production and importation data.

Figure 2: Top 10 imported agricultural crops in Africa, 2020



Notes: * = CAAPs selected crops
Source: PwC Inception Report on CAAPs Fin. Options

CAAPs' demonstration projects

The CAAPs programme is working to establish 10 demonstration projects. Dr. Vodounhessi said that these are not traditional pilots; each demonstration project needs to involve collaboration between two or more countries. To date, two demonstration projects have been identified: a cocoa CAAP between Ghana and

Cote d'Ivoire and an agricultural-industrial park between Zimbabwe and Zambia. At the same time, the programme is mapping all existing special agricultural parks in Africa to establish well-balanced agricultural trade corridors for the continent. All the while, CAAPs is seeking to ensure that the needs of smallholder farmers are kept at the centre of discussions and the corridors are planned so that no one is left behind.



Dr. Vodounhessi during his presentation.



Panel discussion

Moderator

Mr. Jerry Adjololo, Managing Director, Domotale Africa

Panelists

- H.E. Mohamed Moncef Marzouki, Former President of the Republic of Tunisia
- H.E. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, former President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria
- Mr. Ally Gugu, former Deputy Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Trade and Industry, Tanzania
- Prof. Jean Jacques Mbonigaba Muhinda, Regional Manager for East Africa, Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA)
- Dr. Anselme Vodounhessi, Programme Coordinator, Common African Agro-Parks (CAAPs), The Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA)

The panel discussion delved further into what was required to unlock Africa's agricultural potential. To frame the conversation, the moderator proposed two pertinent themes for the session: 1) the linkages between markets and agricultural productivity; 2) the impact of climate change on Africa's agricultural potential.

Political stability and food security

To preface his remarks, President Marzouki stressed that before the continent can deal with technical issues, such as improving markets or facilitating trade, African states must address the fundamental problems of political stability and food security. He said that food security is a dire problem throughout Africa. He said that in his home country of Tunisia, people are queueing in front of bakeries because bread is becoming scarcer and more expensive.

Therefore, he identified three factors that need to be forefront in mind when talking about agriculture in Africa or anywhere else: 1) political stability; 2) political will; and 3) good policies.

Since the revolution in Tunisia in 2011, the country has had nine governments, which means that it has had nine ministers of agriculture, or one minister of agriculture every 15 months. And political instability is a fundamental problem throughout Africa, not just in Tunisia. In addition, the North African region is the least integrated region in Africa. There is little political will among national governments to pursue integration. Finally, even if political stability and political will are present, governments must then put in place sound agricultural policies, for example, policies that prioritize production for domestic consumption and food security not just for export and select the appropriate crops. If you put in place poor policies, you will inevitably have poor results.

Transformation of agriculture will depend on advances in science and technology

H.E. President Jonathan concurred with Presidents Marzouki and Obasanjo that realizing the potential of Africa's agricultural sector will require political will and political action. However, transformation of agriculture in Africa will also require scientific and technological innovation. He highlighted the success of China (pop. 1.45 billion) in raising over 700 million people out of poverty. To do this, the country had to produce enough food for its massive population. In part, this was achieved through the development of hybrid rice varieties with vastly improved yields. Small grain varieties that were not suitable for export were used to feed their population. He added that Australia (pop. 26.1 million or about 20 percent of Nigeria) is a small country but similarly a leader in agriculture.

But, in contrast, the vision of their government has been focused on exporting food, not just producing enough to feed their population. Therefore, visionary leadership in African countries will be required to move beyond rhetoric to revolutionize agriculture and transform the continent’s economy. He said that the African Union is strongly encouraging science, technology and innovation along the whole value chain, from production to packaging so that Africa is no longer simply exporting raw produce from its farms.

He said that the Continental Free Trade Area is critical for expanding the market. But, first and foremost, Africa must produce and use technology to optimally package its output. He further cautioned that if African countries were not able to produce then the existence of a liberal trade policy under the AfCFTA may encourage people to smuggle commodities into Africa then move them from one country to another as if the goods were produced in Africa. Such a scenario would potentially cause problems and conflict between different states.

As described by President Obasanjo, he said that farmers will necessarily require financial assistance to clear land, hire equipment and increase their output but commercial banks in Nigeria no longer lend to farmers because of their inability to repay the loans. Even the Central Bank of Nigeria that normally supports these loans has become very weary because 90 percent or more cannot repay. But President Jonathan considered that this is in large part due to the emphasis upon agriculture as a means of rural development. To truly unlock the continent’s agricultural, African countries need to industrialize farming.

He said:

The roads that service farms are routes for motorcycles and tricycles, not...for big trucks, because the assumption is that it's for rural (development)... and that cannot lead Africa anywhere. We must really industrialize farming. Farming must be taken as a business. And when we hang on that, I think it will surely improve.

Over-reliance on the market to promote agriculture in Africa

Asked to shed light on what things will be required to maximize Africa’s agricultural potential or eliminate constraints, President Marzouki cautioned on over-reliance on the market. He highlighted the experience of Morocco. As a consequence of its market-oriented policies, more goods were produced but mainly for export to foreign countries. Big farmers benefitted at the expense of small farmers, and the goal of creating a group of middle-class farmers did not happen in Morocco or in Tunisia. He said:

Relying only on market ... can be very, very dangerous, because you will have exactly the same phenomena in all the areas of the economy, which means that...the rich people will get more and more rich [sic] and the poor will get more and more poor [sic]...This is not good for agriculture...(and) is not good also for the society as a whole.

The unique nature of the AfCFTA

Asked by the moderator what distinguishes AfCFTA from previous or current regional trade-promoting programmes, Mr. Gugu considered that AfCFTA was quite different. In explanation, Mr. Gugu began by describing the spectrum of trading agreements that African countries are presently party to. First, most African states are

members of the World Trade Organization (WTO), a type of unified, multilateral trading platform, which gave countries leverage to create more open or liberalized markets in Africa as well as outside Africa. However, within the WTO framework, countries also had the flexibility to pursue bilateral or regional integration based on their national interests. Hence, Africa now has various regional blocs, for example, Tanzania is a member of both the East African Community and the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

Whereas the frameworks at the global level tend to be unilateral, and, in certain ways, conditions are imposed upon African states, the AfCFTA is a homegrown framework that has been assessed, negotiated and developed by Africans. Likewise, the protocols are aimed at addressing the unique challenges and problems faced by African countries. The AfCFTA also takes into account the processes that Africa has already undergone. For example, by incorporating Africa’s existing regional configurations, the AfCFTA is building upon what has already happened in Africa. For example, the EAC is already a customs union and a common market. These structures are enshrined within the architecture of the AfCFTA but adds the new configuration of a free trade area. The agreement is also cognizant of the need to nurture infant industries and nascent sectors during the process of industrialization. Hence, the agreement also includes safeguard measures and trade remedies that are similarly homegrown. He said:

I think it is unique. It is different. As others have said I find also it is a game changer. It is an agreement that is demand-driven. It's African, by all accounts.

Asked what value the AfCFTA brings to agribusiness in Africa, Dr. Vodounhessi said that the agreement has the potential to liberate the continent. By eliminating barriers and complications to trade between countries, it opens a huge market for goods produced in Africa.

Later in the discussion, Mr. Gugu stressed the importance of mainstreaming the AfCFTA through national implementation plans. He believed that the agreement has all the necessary provisions and protocols to unlock the continent’s agricultural potential and increase production of commodities to become self-sufficient. This will require political leadership, goodwill and action among all state parties to deliver the agreement as planned.

The role of government and the private sector in agricultural transformation

Asked about ways to de-risk agriculture in Africa, President Jonathan said that both the government and private business will have key roles to play if agribusiness is to succeed. For example, it is much easier for larger firms than smallholder farmers to secure finance because they can guarantee their loans. The reality is that most countries still rely on rain-fed agriculture. Farmers typically crop only once a year, hence, the earnings from what they grow and harvest within three to four months must sustain the needs of families, such as food, healthcare and education for children, for the entire year. Not surprisingly, these farmers find it extremely difficult to repay any loans they take out.

As described by President Obasanjo, the Government of Nigeria implemented a programme whereby the CBN would guarantee commercial banks up to 75 percent of loans for agriculture. Some countries have done better than others in providing assistance to small farmers, but the overall success has been very low. Therefore, President Jonathan advised that serious-minded businesspeople not “briefcase farmers” need to be identified and convinced to invest in agriculture. In this way, the risk of borrowing is reduced. Otherwise, the banks themselves will go bankrupt.

During the question-and-answer session, Ms. Josephine Okot, Managing Director and CEO, Victoria Seeds Ltd., Uganda, remarked on the situation of financing for agribusiness in Africa. From her experience, central banks are disconnected from the agricultural policies on the continent, especially in light of climate change. For example, central bank regulations for commercial banks still stipulate short payback periods for loans (such as 6 months, 9 months or a year). But in the context of crop failure, such a period is too short. She also stressed that the cost of financing is prohibitively high. No matter how much the continent succeeds in integration through the AfCFTA, businesses will not be competitive if they have to pay interest rates of 20 percent on borrowing, which is the highest rate charged on any continent. In stark contrast, seed companies from Europe and China are able to borrow at rates under 2 percent. Home-grown seed companies like her own will simply not be able to compete with foreign enterprises.

The reality of Africa

Asked by the moderator for his opinion on the potential for insurance to reduce risk in the agricultural sector, President Marzouki agreed that solving the problems of finance and insurance will be very important for Africa going forward. However, he reiterated his stance that the continent's political challenges need to be addressed before technical problems can be resolved. Half of the countries on the continent have unstable regimes. He said:

Look what's happening now in Sudan, look what's happening in Tunisia, look what's happening in Libya...We have to talk about the real Africa...Of course, I dream of New Africa that...has solved all of its problems, its financing problems, marketing problems, etc. But the reality is...unfortunately, that disorder in Africa is growing...So please, let's have this in mind.

De-risking agriculture/agribusiness

The moderator asked Mr. Gugu his thoughts on how agribusiness can be made attractive to investors, in particular, what innovative finance arrangements, insurance being one, can be put in place to “de-risk” the sector. To begin, Mr. Gugu highlighted that the establishment of the Tanzania Agricultural Development Bank by President Kikwete was one of the measures taken to de-risk the agricultural sector in his home country.

He then outlined recent actions undertaken by the sixth-phase government in Tanzania, under the leadership of Her Excellency President Dr. Samia Suluhu Hassan. He said that during the past three years, the government has more than tripled the budget for agricultural sector from US\$150 million in 2021 to over US\$500 million currently, which indicates its strong commitment to the sector. Adding to the positive remarks of Prime Minister Desalegn, he highlighted Tanzania's ground-breaking Building a Better Tomorrow—Youth and Women Initiative in Agribusiness (BBT-YIA), which has been designed to take advantage of the youth dividend by supporting their involvement in the agricultural sector. The programme not only supports youth and women through skills training but has also designated and allocated blocks of land from the Government land bank to be used for commercial agribusiness activities by young people and women. In this way, the programme aims to further de-risk and encourage private investment from within Africa as well as outside the continent. Through block farming, the country is working to be self-sufficient in commodities, such as sugar, wheat, edible oils and other products, not only to address domestic demand, but also supply other African member states.



Prof. Muhinda.

Mr. Gugu noted that agriculture is already a key priority within the architecture of the AfCFTA. The agreement includes provisions about competitiveness, about improving seed production, and research and development in agriculture. But he suggested that much remains to be done to strengthen the infrastructure for agribusiness, particularly the marketing infrastructure.

The challenges and opportunities of climate change on agriculture in Africa

Turning attention to the issue of climate change, the moderator asked Prof. Jean Muhinda, who was participating via videoconferencing, to identify what challenges and opportunities climate change will bring to agricultural production and productivity in Africa. In response, he said that climate change is expected to bring significant challenges to the continent. In many cases, recent wins and gains in reducing poverty in households and communities in Africa may be eroded or reversed. But, on a positive note, he felt that climate change also brought opportunities. In particular, it is a wake-up call for the continent to strengthen measures for resilience and adaptation.

Prof. Muhinda highlighted that the number one challenge will be the ability for the continent to produce sufficient food to meet demand for an increasing population. Unpredictability in the food supply could easily cause social and political chaos, as has already been seen in many African countries. Second, the cross-boundary nature of climate shocks means that multi-country solutions are needed to mitigate against increasing climate risks. And given rises in temperature and heat stress, current staple crops like maize and wheat may not be able to be produced in the near future, which calls for a diversified farming system. Third, new pests and diseases for crops

and livestock are now becoming more or less a norm. If countries are not prepared to respond through the right treatments and practices, any gains in agricultural productivity could easily be wiped out and fast.

Finally, the continent must be forward looking and develop predictive capabilities for climate resilience. Countries need to be able forecast the impact of climate change, be it positive or negative, and to plan ahead. Data and analysis systems are needed not only to allow decision-making based on evidence, but also shift businesses, redirect investment, and ultimately install mitigation measures. With a changing climate, crop and animal diversification are going to a key part of future agriculture on the continent. New crop types and varieties and livestock management will need to be tested and proven to be resilient in the face of climate change.

Contributing from the floor, Ms. Okot also stressed the need for increased investment in research and development to contend with the impacts of climate change. To start, she noted the increase in invasive pests such as locusts and the continent-wide outbreaks of African army worm. She highlighted the research work being done by Africa Rise and the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA), which has a Center for Entomology in Khartoum. However, both of these centres are currently funded by overseas donors. She believed that without sustained investment by African governments in research and development, the continent will not succeed in realizing its agricultural potential. Research is needed into indigenous species of vegetables and crops, such as Bambara groundnuts, but IITA or Africa Rise cannot finance such research if the money is coming from elsewhere. Likewise, she stressed the importance of supporting Centres of Excellence for mechanization so that Africa can completely

eradicate the use of the hand hoe. She further recommended that Centres of Excellence for mechanization be included in the mapping exercises by the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa.

Adaptation and mitigation strategies for climate change

Prof. Muhinda was asked a follow-up question on whether Africa had adaptation and mitigation strategies in place to address climate change. In response, he said that Africa remains committed as a continent to being part of the solution to climate change. This was despite the facts that:

- 1 Africa is the continent that is least responsible for global warming, accounting for only 4 percent of the world's greenhouse gas emissions;
- 2 Africa is expected to be the worst hit by climate change; and
- 3 Africa has the least capacity to cope with the adverse impacts of climate change due to the limited response and buffer capacities of communities.

He said that Africa is trying to build resilience and adaptation and the African Common Position on Food Systems paper was presented at the United Nations 2021 Food Systems Summit. The continent is advocating to access funding from mechanisms such as the Global Climate Fund, the Adaptation Fund, and the new Loss and Damage Fund established under COP 27. He said that these issues will be taken forward through one voice as a continent towards the next COP 28 meeting.

On a positive note, he said that the continent is currently testing a number of crops that may withstand climate stress, including some traditional crops like sorghum, millet, cassava and legumes that are being grown across different agro-ecological zones on the continent.

On the issue of climate change, President Marzouki stated that Africa had little power to stop it from happening; slowing or stopping global warming was dependent on the actions of four countries/regions: China, India, Western Europe and the United States of America. However, he concurred with Professor Muhinda that African states should ask for compensation for the damage done to the continent. He also agreed that African states must adapt by selecting the right crops for the new climatic conditions. In particular, he stressed that countries need to be cautious about planting water-intensive crops. He cited the experience of Morocco and Tunisia where water-intensive crops were widely used resulting in a deepening water crisis, which was extremely bad for the people. Therefore, he reiterated that communities need to be involved in the process of deciding what's grown and where; relying on the market alone was very dangerous.

Climate-smart technology to improve food security

In addition to different climate-adapted crops, Dr. Vodounhessi was asked what could be done to improve Africa's food security and boost agricultural productivity within the context of climate change. He said that at the community level, climate change is being experienced most often as changes or distortions in seasonal rainfall patterns and longer droughts, but most smallholder farmers (up to 80 percent) in Africa still rely on rain-fed agriculture. Therefore, he stressed the need for African member states to listen to farmers and invest in appropriate climate-smart technologies to build the resilience of farming communities. He emphasized the need for greater investment in water infrastructure, including irrigation and rainwater management systems at farm level in existing food basket areas of the continent to boost food production and food security. Other solutions may be as simple as cool

storage systems to reduce post-harvest losses, but farmers will need financial support and skills training to access these technologies. Without adequate storage facilities or reliable road transport networks to the farm level, he said post-harvest losses can be as high as 65 percent of production.

To protect against climate change and the growing incidence of extreme weather events, President Jonathan again emphasized the need for research to develop grains or plants that mature over shorter periods of time to suit local climates. Theoretically, this should be possible. In addition, he agreed with Dr. Vodounhessi that appropriate studies and technologies are needed to preserve produce for longer periods, so that food that may have to be grown in a three- or four-month period can last a family for the rest of the year.

Genetically modified crops versus traditional organic methods of farming

President Jonathan also suggested further research into genetically modified crops but acknowledged the ongoing controversy on the use of genetically modified varieties versus traditional organic methods of farming. Asked for his input on this issue, Prof. Muhinda said that the adoption of agricultural technologies must be context specific. The continent necessarily has a variety of agro-ecological zones, a variety of farming systems and a variety of commodities. In parts of Africa, value chains have benefitted from biotechnology, including genetically modified crops. But there are value chains with potential to grow and produce more output using traditional varieties and methods. Hence, Africa cannot apply a one-size-fits-all approach. Rather, countries will need to assess what crops have big potential with respect to

biotechnology and those that still have a productivity margin using existing technologies and knowledge. He said:

What is most important, currently, for smallholder farmers in Africa is to have the right policies in place combined with the right access to the right technologies, the right inputs, more importantly, the right knowledge and the right services from the private sector across the whole range of value chains.

In his closing remarks, Prof Muhinda emphasized the need for Africa to focus on areas that have high production potential and start producing what the continent eats. Investment in what Africa consumes is limited. However, crop choices should not be constrained by food habits. Diversifying and expanding high-productive and less risky crops into food systems, like root crops which are consumed across the continent and other perennial crops would be critical moving forward.

He also stressed the need to hasten the creation of the local market under the AfCFTA framework. Tariffs and non-tariff barriers need to be removed as soon as possible to enable the smooth flow of agricultural products between countries, regionally and continentally.

Regional specialization

Asked about the prospects for regional specialization in agriculture in Africa and complementary trade arrangements, Mr. Gugu said that from a technical standpoint the implementation of the AfCFTA, like any free trade agreement, will raise fears that some member states will be losers and winners in the process of liberalization. For example, countries that joined the East African Community were initially fearful

about opening up their markets but arguably every partner state is getting a fair share. Similarly, when it comes to the AfCFTA and regional specialization in agricultural commodities, he said that countries will inevitably ask where they sit in particular value chains, so they are not on the losing side. But realistically, some partner countries will concentrate on specific commodities because they have a comparative and competitive advantage to produce them. For example, if a country is more abundantly blessed to grow cotton or maize, then concentrate on cotton or maize, while other states can concentrate on other commodities for which they have an advantage. In turn, this will facilitate mutually beneficial trade between partner countries.

Later in the question-and-answer session, as an example of the potential for regional specialization, Mr. Gugu described the experience of the Burundi-based fertilizer producer, ITRACOM Fertilizer Limited. During a visit to Burundi, H.E. President Suluhu Hassan met with representatives of the company. Based on their discussions about the company’s potential market and source of raw materials, it was proposed that the company establish its factory in Tanzania. As the second largest livestock keeper in Africa, Tanzania was an ideal place for Itracom to reliably source manure for its organic fertilizer. The company accepted this offer, and it is expected to commence production by July 2023. By the end of the year, they expect to produce 500,000 tons of fertilizer but their target is 1.5 million ton per year. Mr. Gugu said that this was great demonstration not only of the free movement of capital within Africa, but also regional value chains/division of labour as the company was able to relocate from Burundi to Tanzania to enjoy economies of scale from raw materials.

In his final remarks, President Jonathan said that asking specific African countries or zones to produce different crops should not be a reason for fear. He said:

Africa is not closing its trade borders with the world. Countries will still trade with other parts of Africa. ... The African Continental Free Trade Area, if we have it, will encourage local production. And, of course, it will create a little bit of competition, which will enhance our products and increase the packaging and other things. So, I think we will get more, and I don't see how anybody, or any country will lose...So, I think it is good for Africa.



ITRACOM Fertilizer Limited factory in Dodoma, Tanzania. Photo credit: ITRACOM Fertilizer Limited

SESSION II: THE MARKET AS A DRIVER FOR FOSTERING AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIVITY IN AFRICA

Demand for agricultural products is critical in fostering agricultural production and productivity. However, since colonial times, African countries have not designed agriculture to suit domestic, regional or continental requirements. Rather African countries have frequently adjusted their agriculture to accommodate global demand and markets. The result has been to produce raw commodities for overseas use with the consequence that when world commodity prices fall, African economies suffer.

Even with post-independence efforts to embrace regional integration, markets and trade, Africa’s intra-trade is still relatively low compared to other regions of the world such as East Asia and Europe. In 2017, for instance, the share of intra-African exports as a percentage of total African exports was 16.6 percent compared with 68.1 percent for Europe, 59.4 percent for Asia, and 55 percent for America.

The launch of AfCFTA provides the opportunity to consolidate the continent into one trade area and to enhance intra-African trade as well as its share of global trade. With a single continental market, Africa can promote trade competition and complementarity, which are vital for increasing innovation and productivity, as well as production and quality of agricultural products. It is also key in enhancing economic linkages and promoting industrialization.

This second session featured an introductory presentation by Dr. Frannie Léautier, Senior Partner and CEO, Southbridge Investments, on strengthening the market for agricultural products in Africa as a prerequisite for the economic transformation of the continent. Her address was followed by a panel discussion with H.E. Thomas Boni Yayi, former President of the Republic of Benin, and H.E. Dr. Ernest Bai Koroma, former President of the Republic of Sierra Leone.

Expert presentation by Dr. Frannie Léautier, Senior Partner and CEO, Southbridge Investments

Reflecting on the words of President Mkapa in his video tribute and the astute advice given by the former heads of state today, Dr. Léautier opened her presentation with the proverb:

He who listens to an elder’s advice does not come to grief.

— Swahili proverb

She felt it encapsulated the purpose of the Forum and a central message of the day’s proceedings that inspired leadership will be needed for Africa’s transformation. For her part, she would focus upon the market as a driver of agricultural productivity on the continent. African economies remain heavily dependent on agriculture, hence, strengthening the agricultural sector will occupy



Dr. Léautier stressed the need for strengthening the market for agricultural products in Africa as a prerequisite for the economic transformation of the continent.

an important place in the transformation of the continent generally, and regional integration particularly. Of all the markets in Africa, she said that local food markets still work quite well. Therefore, her remarks will seek to answer two critical questions: How can countries scale up the success of local food markets to offer solutions for regional integration? And how can the agricultural market sector operate more effectively and efficiently?

Key components of the market in the agricultural sector

Dr. Léautier identified three key components of the market in the agricultural sector: 1) basic foods; 2) superfoods; and 3) healthy foods in general. Basic foods are the foundation of the agricultural market. And any government that wants to stay in power needs to maintain the supply and prices of basic foods. At present, the world is experiencing an inflationary crisis in basic food prices, in part as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine, which have severely disrupted supply chains. Hence, if the continent can improve regional integration, particularly around supply chain logistics, this will help to keep the prices of basic foods lower. However, Dr. Léautier noted that trade amongst East African Community countries increased dramatically during COVID, particularly around food trade because global supply chains were constrained. Tanzania started to export more to Kenya, and vice versa, and South African trade overall increased by more than 30 percent. So, crises can actually lead to beneficial solutions.

The second component of the market in the agricultural sector is what Dr. Léautier referred to as superfoods. She described that consumers in advanced economies are demanding products that Africans used to eat as basic foods, for example, ginger and baobab, even grains like teff, which is

a basic grain for Ethiopia. Also, given the increasing levels of gluten intolerance, cassava flour has become an important ingredient in the manufacturing and processing of many foodstuffs. Increased demand for these products has again put pressure on the prices of these foods locally.

The third and final area identified by Dr. Léautier was health foods generally. Yet again, the prices of products with health benefits are pushing up prices and creating new markets that didn't exist before. One good example is Moringa leaf powder, which is now considered an important ingredient/supplement in infant formula. This plant is also very easy to cultivate, cropping within three months. She said that a small bag of powdered Moringa costs 10 euros in Zanzibar.

Key factors for the development of the market for agricultural products in Africa

In general, for markets to succeed, Dr. Léautier said supply and demand need to reasonably match. Put simply, when a product is scarce, the price goes up. Hence, Africa also needs to improve productivity; greater efficiency in the use of inputs will lead to greater affordability of outputs.

Tastes and preferences

Dr. Léautier highlighted three demand-side factors that drive market development. The first factor is tastes and preferences. As she mentioned earlier, foods that are traditionally eaten in Africa, such as complex grains, nuts and tubers, like sweet potato and cassava, now classified as superfoods, are in high demand in Western countries, which is driving price increases. Hence, tastes and preferences are a big driver of demand, in addition to the quantity and quality of the product. Demand is also influenced by whether an agricultural product is an intermediary input or a final product.

Logistics and supply chain

The second big factor for market development, particularly in regional integration, is the logistics and supply chain. Traditionally, the logistics and supply chain has referred to transport infrastructure, such as roads, rail and shipping. But today, with the growth of artificial intelligence (AI) and robotics, the whole area of infrastructure for agricultural purposes, is shifting dramatically. Combined with the possibility for long distance communication digitally, Dr. Léautier believed that a revolution in the way agricultural cargo is transported around the world is underway and that Africa has the opportunity to do things differently. For example, the availability of new technology in the aviation sector has the potential to bring down the cost of transporting cargo by air to the level of trucking which would connect and open up markets across the continent. And, in reality, Africa does not currently have the capacity or resources to develop the interconnecting road infrastructure, therefore, transport by air may be an increasingly viable solution.

Finance

The third area for market development is finance. Here, Dr. Léautier proposed that central banks could play an important role in opening up markets through carbon finance. Africa has the largest single, undisturbed contiguous forest in the world, which is serving a vital role in sequestering carbon during the global transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy. By establishing a carbon market, central banks would facilitate trade amongst countries not only for existing forests but also areas of land that are improved or restored. For instance, any restoration of the vast grazing lands from the Horn of Africa all the way down to Mozambique and across the countries of the Sahel will immediately generate a carbon benefit.

If livestock farmers can combine grazing with carbon sequestration, Africa can simultaneously supply its protein needs and help solve the problem of climate change.

As mentioned by many speakers today, access to finance for agriculture is limited. For example, very few agricultural businesses participate in capital markets not only due to the size of these enterprises (most are small- to medium-sized) but also, when they do, they cannot generate a stable flow of revenues to attract investors. Hence, intermediary financing solutions are required, for example, loan guarantees such as the one President Obasanjo described in the plenary session. So too, insurance and re-insurance markets are under-utilized by farmers. Indeed, as a continent, Africa is the lowest consumer of insurance products. Agriculture is a very risky sector, hence, insurance is critically important to protect farmers against seasonal fluctuations. Dr. Léautier also recommended further development of commodity markets, like the Ethiopia Commodity Exchange (ECX), which was established in 2008. For example, soybean is one of the most traded products on global markets. Currently, what is produced in Africa is exported whole but additional value could be added by local processing. Commodity markets would help drive that process. Lastly, Dr. Léautier highlighted the potential for private equity to support businesses in the food and agricultural sector. She gave the example of Sahel Capital, a Nigerian-based private equity firm which is providing innovative financial instruments in the agri-space.

Lastly, trade and trade finance are critical for market development. Trade within our agricultural market starts between rural and urban areas; most foodstuffs are grown in rural areas then transported for consumption in urban areas. The next level of trade is intercity trade, which mostly involves trade of processed primary food products with only minimal packaging, for example, canned goods. However, the real challenge for Africa is to increase its participation in global trade. At present, the continent accounts for only 3 percent of global trade. Dr. Léautier advised that, in order to increase trade, African countries must invest in capacity building, standardization and sanitation. For example, cashew nuts, which are grown in Cote d'Ivoire, Tanzania and Ghana, are in high demand for processing into plant-based milk as a substitute for cow's milk. Hence, cashew farmers have an opportunity to participate in a very high value-added market, but processors must meet sanitary and phytosanitary standards. Hence, to expand and accelerate trade, the continent needs to invest in capacity building and health-related inspections and standards for its agricultural products.

Africa would also benefit substantially from investing in the digital economy for the purposes of agricultural trade. Data and analytics could improve the quality and performance of agricultural markets as well as pharmaceutical, carbon and other markets.

To conclude her presentation, Dr. Léautier noted several stresses on the agricultural sector that impinge on market development. The first is water. She said that Africa is blessed to have the largest underground freshwater resources in the world. These water sources are under-utilized while the continent's surface water is contaminated and over-utilized. In turn, water stresses are now putting urban areas and agricultural land in competition. She highlighted the positive collaboration between smallholder farmers, wildlife associations and the City of Nairobi to better manage water supplies in the Tana River basin in Kenya for agriculture, for wildlife and for the city. But water stress is an ongoing area of concern in many countries of Africa. She predicted that water mining of underground water resources may become a very lucrative activity in the future.

She finished her remarks with two Swahili proverbs. The first related to innovation which will be an essential aspect of driving market development in Africa.

To stumble is not to fall down. It is to fall forward.

The second related to regional integration:

A good thing sells itself; it doesn't need marketing. But a bad thing needs a lot of promotion.

Closing on an optimistic note, she said:

We (Africa) have launched the Continental Free Trade Area. It's selling itself so let's go and get it done.



A farmer practices drip irrigation in the Tana River Basin, Kenya. Photo credit: CIAT | Georgina Smith



From L-R: Dr. Léautier, H.E. Yayi, H.E. Koroma, and Mr. Adjololo.

Panel discussion

Moderator

Mr. Jerry Adjololo, Managing Director, Domotale Africa

Panelists

- H.E. Thomas Boni Yayi, Former President of the Republic of Benin
- H.E. Dr. Ernest Bai Koroma, Former President of the Republic of Sierra Leone
- Hon. Dr. Bryan Acheampong, Minister of Food and Agriculture, Ghana
- Dr. Frannie Léautier, Senior Partner and CEO, Southbridge Investments
- Mr. Alex Dadey, Executive Chairman, KGL Group

Strategies to enhance the welfare of farmers

To begin the panel discussion, the moderator asked Minister Acheampong what initiatives can be put in place by African governments to enhance the welfare of farmers. In response, the Minister described the strategies and programmes in the agricultural sector implemented by the Government of Ghana since President Akufo-Addo came to power in 2017. At that time, the yields of farmers were very low; for example, the average yield for cereal crops was approximately 3 metric tons per hectare. Therefore, one of the first programmes introduced by the government was Planting for Food and Jobs, which initially provided a 50 percent subsidy to farmers on improved seeds and fertilizer. As a result, average yields for cereals increased to 6 metric tons per hectare, boosting the income of farmers. As President Akufo-Addo remarked in the plenary discussion, the subsidy programme is not sustainable over the long-term, so the government reduced the input subsidy to 15 percent for 2022.

However, in 2023, the government has commenced rolling out a new input credit system to further boost farming incomes. Under this programme, machinery, improved seeds and fertilizer (which typically represent about 80 to 85 percent of production costs) are provided on credit to the farmer, hence, freeing up the money of the farmer to use as working capital. Input credits to farmers are now linked to the Ghana Card, the national identification card. The target for this new initiative is to increase average yield for cereals from 6 metric tons to 10 or 12 metric tons, i.e., double their productivity and further boost farming incomes. Through these programmes, the government has helped to stabilize the agricultural industry for about 3.5 million farmers.

At the same time, he said that the government is working to reduce the costs of getting produce from “farm to fork.” By cutting out inefficient

linkages and reducing intermediaries/middlemen, not only do farmers receive a higher proportion of the value for their produce, but also prices for consumers are more stable. Additionally, if companies are interested in processing or trading commodities, i.e., agribusiness, there is room for them to make money as well. All in all, the government is committed to supporting farmers and all players in the value chain. The Government of Ghana sees agriculture as serious business, therefore, it should be private-sector driven; the government should only control the levers and make sure that it works for both farmer and consumer.

Breaking free from the donor syndrome

In his follow-up question, the moderator asked Minister Acheampong how African economies could break free from the donor syndrome? For example, every year, Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire are forced financially to syndicate loans across the

world in order to export and derive income from cocoa. In response, the Minister said that from the 2023/24 cocoa season, Ghana will no longer pledge 100 percent of its cocoa output to the syndication market. Rather, the government is aiming to reduce the proportion of cocoa sold through syndication to under 40 percent and retain the remainder to sell on the spot market. If successful, Minister Acheampong said that Ghana would save huge sums of transactional fees on syndication loans, which amount to approximately US\$15 million for a US\$2 billion crop. Again, these fee savings can be passed on to the farmer.

Asked how Africa could maintain the delicate balance between intra-Africa trade and external trade to the rest of the world, Minister Acheampong considered that demand and supply in the market will ultimately determine where and what commodities are sold. For the most part, countries sell to those offering the best prices. However, if African states want to trade amongst themselves, then countries will need to commit to purchasing commodities from each other. To achieve this, AfCFTA must champion agreements between countries to source commodities from each other instead of importing. Regional specialization will valuably contribute to achieving this outcome. If countries produce more of a commodity than they consume based upon their competitive advantage, the surpluses will be available for trade.

Multifaceted solutions are required to promote agricultural productivity in Africa

Asked by the moderator how agricultural economies in Africa can be improved for the benefit of the continent rather than for external interests, President Koroma described the need for holistic solutions. He said that the issue needed

to be addressed from two angles: 1) production for local consumption by the farmers themselves; and 2) what is available in the market and at what price. With respect to local production, he said that Africa is still not doing well. Most farmers still engage in subsistence agriculture and, until recently, local agriculture has not been sufficiently promoted. However, the African Union 2003 Maputo Declaration on Agriculture and Food Security and the Coalition for African Rice Development (CARD) processes, have led to greater engagement in agriculture across the continent to the extent that countries have been motivated to qualify for CARD recognition.

Similarly, with respect to local markets, he considered some progress had been made but Africa was not yet there. Therefore, President Koroma welcomed the establishment of the AfCFTA as a great platform to change the narrative and drive agricultural development and trade in Africa. Echoing the remarks of President Akufo-Addo, the current proportion of intra-Africa trade (less than 20 percent) was deplorably low in comparison to the proportion of the continent’s trade with Europe (60 to 65 percent). These proportions need to be changed, but to achieve this will take multifaceted solutions.

Fundamentally, the productivity of African farmers will need to improve if they are to compete with overseas producers. He said that, at present in Sierra Leone, a bag of locally produced rice is more expensive than a bag of imported rice. When the two are placed side-by-side in the market, the consumer will purchase the more affordable. To change this outcome, through the AfCFTA, African states will need to address issues of pricing and marketing along the value chain as well as infrastructure, not only roads but also communications and electricity.

The importance of good governance

Taking up the same question by the moderator of what can be done to foster agricultural productivity in Africa, President Yayi stressed the importance of governance. He believed that governance in Africa was evolving to take account of changes on the continent, both in member states and across regions. However, he considered that the continent had a governance problem generally. He said:

We haven't managed to establish a clean environment that allows us to do what we need to do properly. And so far, we've been doing it separately, instead of doing it together. Because together we're stronger. And together, we could diversify our points of view; pooling efforts and resources to produce quality products for our populations.

With respect to agriculture, he said that agriculture has always been the foundation and heart of the continent’s economy, employing a large proportion of its youth and providing food security. But, despite recognizing the importance of agriculture, he said that Africa has not been able to put in place the pillars to move forward in time, such as training, infrastructure, water supply and markets. Expanding on the comments of President Koroma, he said that with respect to agricultural governance, the African Union 2003 Maputo Declaration on Agriculture and Food Security recommended that African countries should aim to allocate at least 10 percent of national budget expenditure to agriculture. On that basis, he said that some countries have achieved better results than others, but the problems of subsistence farming and rural poverty have not been solved.

Appropriate remuneration for producers

Echoing comments from earlier sessions, President Yayi said that, fundamentally, Africa

needs to produce. The AfCFTA aims to reduce the continent’s need for imports, but this cannot happen if Africa does not produce enough to meet the consumption needs of its population. And, in practice, governments in some countries are still pushing farmers to produce for outside markets not domestic consumption. In addition, funding for agricultural programmes from the IMF and World Bank come with conditions, for example, no incentives to farmers and other players within the value chain.

However, he said that if producers aren't properly remunerated—whether for producing cocoa, coffee, cashew, soyabeans, cotton or any other agricultural commodity—the value chains for those commodities will naturally disappear. The same applies to agro-processing. He said:

We want to produce to process [and] to consume. We don't consume cotton lint, for example. We consume fabrics. If we want to transform cotton into fabric, then the processors need to be better remunerated. Also, naturally, we want these products to be consumed on our continent. And naturally, if there's a surplus, we export. So, how can we better remunerate producers so as not to kill the cotton industry?

President Yayi strongly believed that Africa is blessed with the resources to produce everything it needs. But again, good governance will be essential, including respect for democracy, human rights and fundamental freedoms. If the middlemen in value chains practically profit from the labour of poor farmers or if one person owns these chains (in other words, a monopoly situation) then producers are effectively enslaved. This is bad governance.

What can Africa’s partners do to support the AfCFTA?

Asked by the moderator, what Africa's partners could do to support the progress of AfCFTA to

unlock the continent's agricultural potential, Dr. Léautier identified several significant opportunities. For example, in the case of the United States and the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), which is up for renewal in 2025, and the European Union's Everything but Arms scheme, she suggested that these major partners could speed up the process of regional integration by negotiating with the African Union on behalf of all African states, instead of negotiating bilateral agreements with each country. She felt that this would not only help to promote specialization and intra-country trade but also create local markets. She also highlighted the need for investments to improve the capacity for local production, particularly in energy infrastructure as manufacturing relies on energy.

She then identified several promising opportunities for local manufacturing in Africa. To begin, she recalled that when President Yayi was head of state, he sought to have Benin acquire ownership of the company Vlisco, which produces a large percentage of African clothing. All the designs are African, yet almost all the manufacturing is done overseas, and the company that owns the Vlisco brand is Dutch. But such arrangements can be changed. With the right agreements in place, African countries could transform the cotton-to-textile value chain by manufacturing locally. In this way, African clothing would become truly African. And linkages to the design and fashion industry could also be developed on the services side.

She gave another example from Benin, in this case, pineapples. She said that not only are Beninese pineapples delicious, but a chemical extracted from pineapple cores is now in high demand as an ingredient in weight loss pills. Currently, this is not manufactured locally, but again African countries could tap into a huge global industry. Likewise, chemicals from cocoa

beans are now being extracted for use in very high value-added cosmetic products. By planting shade trees, cocoa farmers could also access carbon trading. In these and many other ways, partners of Africa could contribute to the continent's sustainable development.

As mentioned by President Koroma, partners could also valuably help through investments in infrastructure. She noted that the final stretch of the Trans-African Highway network was recently inaugurated in Tanzania, so the continent is now fully connected by roads from north to south and east to west. But this still leaves much of the vast interior of Africa unconnected. Additionally, partners of Africa could help support the dynamic growth of innovation, which is critically needed for agriculture, for example, for digital platforms that provide working capital loans to low-income farmers; bringing in solutions in the insurance industry; supporting banks that lend to agriculture to develop guarantee products; or even helping countries improve their local commodity markets and capital market products for farmers as very few presently access those services.

Transforming agriculture in Africa

To finish the discussion, the moderator asked each panellist to identify two things that would be essential to drive agricultural development in Africa. In response, President Koroma said that market pricing and market access were critical. With respect to pricing, the cost of the end product will depend upon its cost of production and the cost of the money used to produce it. Therefore, a balance needs to be found such that the market price of the end product will be competitive but also provide a sufficient return to the farmer. So that, in turn, the farmer will not only be able to keep producing but ideally be able to invest to achieve better yields.

Second, expanding access to markets will require improvements in infrastructure as well as the right information about those markets. If a farmer in West Africa finds it very difficult or very expensive to move his goods to East Africa, then it will be cheaper for the consumer in East Africa to buy the goods from China.

In closing, President Koroma said that governments, banks, farmer representatives and farmers need to work together, to think outside of the box to provide loans and guarantees (and insurance) to reduce the risk of farming activities. This finance needs to be affordable to farmers but also profitable for banks. He said:

I see nothing wrong in giving subsidies to farmers, nothing wrong in supporting the farming process, nothing wrong in supporting banks that give loans ... We have to find a way of supporting the banks, coming up with initiatives to address the financial problems of our farmers. If we don't address this problem, we'll be spinning around the same point without making progress.

Dr. Léautier identified three things that will drive agricultural development on the continent. First, Africa is rich. It is rich in land, forests and resources, all of which can be harnessed for the development of the continent. Second, Africa is young. It is the youngest continent in the world. By 2050, three out of every five people under 19 years of age will be African. The continent can employ that amazing wealth of youth to transform agriculture, but it needs to excite young people to participate in the sector.

She believed that youth can be encouraged into agriculture by adopting digital technologies, such as AI, robotics and block chains, having them participate in scientific research to come up with new ideas and innovations, engaging young people in small-scale processing and transformation of

agricultural products, or solving the very complex logistical issues to run the sector efficiently. Finally, Africa is optimistic. It can build on that optimism to develop and bridge the gaps that have been identified today. In closing, she said:

Whether it's the markets, whether it's access to finance, whether it's infrastructure. Because when you're optimistic you invest in the future. And so, I would say, we are rich, we are young and we're optimistic. And any such combination gives you the progress you need for success.

For his closing remarks, President Yayi strongly emphasized that for a trade liberalization scheme to succeed whether at the regional level like ECOWAS or the continental level like the AfCFTA, raw agricultural products must be able to circulate freely. If trade barriers or bans are imposed, the movement and trade of products is prevented. He also stressed that, as far as possible, the market should work to set commodity prices not the State. But, if a country wishes to set a ceiling price for a product, it must do so openly. Taking the example of soybeans, he said that the price for soybeans in Togo is presently around 500 francs per kilo while in Benin it is 190 francs per kilo. Based upon this example alone, President Yayi said that much work remains to be done to harmonize the laws and regulations in different countries so that producers in one state don't suffer compared to another. In principle, as a free trade zone, there should be no customs duties.

In conclusion, he said that the African Continental Free Trade Area is the “project of the century”. But for the AfCFTA to succeed, arrangements for implementation must be clear and transparent, and member states will need to do everything in their power to introduce better governance in their domestic affairs to fully realize the potential of the AfCFTA to transform the continent.

SESSION III: MOBILIZING AFRICAN STAKEHOLDERS TO ENSURE SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AfCFTA

The African Continental Free Trade Area came into effect on 1 January 2021, hence, implementation is only in the early stages. As the world’s largest free trade area in terms of number of countries, and soon to be the world’s largest in terms of population, the AfCFTA holds immense potential to contribute to Africa’s transformation. But its successful implementation will depend on the political leadership, goodwill and action of African stakeholders and external partners. Therefore, the third and final session of the Forum was dedicated to identifying the stakeholders, policies and actions that will be critical for implementation of the AfCFTA. The session featured an introductory presentation on mobilizing stakeholders in Africa to implement the AfCFTA by Mr. Prudence Sebahizi, Director, Institutional Matters and Programmes Coordination, AfCFTA Secretariat, followed by a panel discussion.

Expert presentation by Mr. Prudence Sebahizi, Director, Institutional Matters and Programmes Coordination, AfCFTA Secretariat

To start, Mr. Sebahizi related that the theme of the session had been previously worded as “Mobilizing Africa’s partners to support the success of the AfCFTA”. But upon reflection and guidance from leadership, the topic was revised

to emphasize the central role that African stakeholders will play in the implementation of the AfCFTA. This affirms the aspiration of AU’s Agenda 2063 for self-reliance and self-determination. Africa should not rely on external partners for its economic development.

If implemented appropriately, the AfCFTA is estimated to increase Africa’s income by US\$450 billion. In comparison, Mr. Sebahizi noted that the total amount of official development assistance (ODA), aka foreign aid, received annually by the continent is US\$65 billion. Foreign direct investment (FDI) is marginally higher at US\$83 billion. Hence, with successful implementation of the AfCFTA, the continent will have sufficient resources to look after its population. Indeed, the total sum of remittances sent from Africans living overseas back to their families is now over US\$100 billion annually. Africa has the means to become self-reliant.

Mr. Sebahizi said that his presentation would be divided into four parts. The first part would briefly describe the present context in Africa, in other words, the paradox that Africa is experiencing. The second part would outline the sources of financing for business on the continent. The third part will look at domestic resource mobilization for implementation of AfCFTA, and the fourth and last part will offer recommendations drawn from the analysis.



Mr. Sebahizi emphasized the central role of African stakeholders in the implementation of the AfCFTA.

The paradox of Africa

In common with remarks from earlier sessions, Mr. Sebahizi said that Africa’s current status is something of a paradox. The continent lags far behind other continents in terms of economic development and Africa continues to be a net food importer. The food import bill for the whole of Africa was about US\$80 billion per year over the period from 2015 to 2017. Yet, Africa holds 65 percent of the world’s uncultivated arable land, 30 percent of global mineral deposits, abundant water resources and a huge labour force. The continent has the potential to feed 9 billion people by 2050, more than the current world population, yet Africa is still reliant on external sources for food security.

What can be done to maximize the potential benefit of the AfCFTA?

The AfCFTA is envisaged to be a pillar of Africa’s economic transformation. Effective implementation will require sustained effort, multi-stakeholder participation, sufficient resources, diverse sources of funding, and the creation of a conducive environment for business. Much of the burden for implementation will be carried by national governments but the role of the private sector is also vital. The private sector has to produce. Mr. Sebahizi stressed:

Implementation of the AfCFTA will not mean anything until the private sector—manufacturers, farmers, bankers, telecom operators, importers, exporters—understand, appreciate, own and champion the AfCFTA. So that's the message to each and every stakeholder on the continent to see their role in the implementation of the AfCFTA.

Financial resources for implementation of the AfCFTA

Mr. Sebahizi then provided an analysis of the four major sources of finance for implementation of the AfCFTA from a macroeconomic perspective to better understand why Africa should look inward rather than rely on resources from outside. He started by emphasizing that when a country is able to export more than it imports, then it won’t need to rely on other financial assistance. However, the trade balance for Africa has always been deficit, hence, the continent still relies on three external sources of financial inflows: FDI, ODA and remittances. He discussed each source in turn.

As mentioned above, Africa received a total of US\$83 billion in FDI in 2021. This represented only 5 percent of global foreign direct investment. Estimates from the World Bank indicate that if the AfCFTA is implemented properly, that FDI—from the rest of the world and between African states—would increase by 111 percent. If other policies are also harmonized across the continent—for example, investment policies, competition, e-commerce policies, intellectual property rights—then the flow of FDI is estimated to increase by 159 percent. Again, as discussed earlier, remittances flowing back to the continent from Africans living abroad total over US\$100 billion per year, which is higher than the FDI currently being received.

Data for ODA from 1990 show that Africa was and remains the biggest recipient of aid. The continent’s share of global ODA is more than 40 percent, but what has Africa been able to achieve with this aid? In answering this question, Mr. Sebahizi said that two issues need to be clearly understood. First, aid flows are not just charity.

When any country decides to help another country, it does so in its own interest, and what that assistance is spent on is largely determined by the donor country. Donors decide which countries they are going to support, how much they give and what that money is going to be used for. And the economic and political interests, motivations and objectives for ODA flowing to Africa, as well as the conditions attached to aid, vary from donor to donor.

To assess the economic impact of foreign aid, Mr. Sebahizi looked at the relationship between the amounts of aid received and economic growth in individual countries. The results are mixed; the investment of aid in some countries has contributed to economic growth, other countries have fallen into a poverty trap, while for others, aid has had no impact at all. At the micro-level, the impact of aid on each and every individual or community is not known. But viewed from the macro-level, aid has brought little or no progress to Africa overall.

The benefits of trade

Mr. Sebahizi then turned to the final source of income: trade. As he mentioned in his introduction, African countries will gain so much more by trading with each other and reducing reliance on imports. If countries produce enough food for domestic consumption, then they won’t need to spend hard-earned foreign exchange on imports. States can gain money by saving through import substitution and/or by increasing exports to the rest of the world. At present, African only accounts for 3 percent of global trade. But, by increasing that percentage by just 1 percent, Africa will contribute more than US\$70 billion to its economy, which is more than all the aid it receives. That's why economists make the case that countries need trade more than aid.

Mobilizing Africa's domestic resources for the AfCFTA

The last part of Mr. Sebahizi’s presentation was focused on mobilizing domestic resources to implement the AfCFTA. To begin, he noted that the African Union adopted the Resources Mobilisation Strategy at the Assembly in February 2023 which emphasizes the mobilization of resources within the continent to realize the goals of Agenda 2063.

Looking from the perspective of the AfCFTA, Mr. Sebahizi said that the AfCFTA Secretariat is likewise focused upon leveraging partnerships within Africa for effective resource mobilization, including:

- 1 Private sector partnerships: The AfCFTA Secretariat partners with the private sector to promote investment, entrepreneurship and job creation in Africa. This involves collaborations with businesses, chambers of commerce, and trade associations to facilitate cross-border trade, encourage the establishment of new businesses, and promote innovation.
- 2 Development partners: The AfCFTA Secretariat partners with development organizations such as the African Development Bank (AfDB), Afrexim Bank, Africa Finance Corporation (AFC) United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and World Bank to access financial and technical support. These partnerships help to build the capacity of the Secretariat and AfCFTA Institutions to support the implementation of AfCFTA programmes.
- 3 Regional economic communities (RECs): The AfCFTA Secretariat collaborates with RECs to promote regional integration and harmonization of policies and regulations.

4

Civil society organizations (CSOs): The AfCFTA Secretariat will engage with CSOs to ensure that the voices of ordinary citizens are heard in the implementation of the AfCFTA.

5

International organizations: such as United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) to promote global trade rules and facilitate the integration of African economies into the global economy. These partnerships help to enhance the visibility of the AfCFTA on the international stage and promote its objectives.

Wherever possible, the AfCFTA will seek to establish strategic partnerships with private enterprise, development partners, RECs and CSOs within the continent to drive AfCFTA implementation. Domestically, the AfCFTA is looking to mobilize resources from:

1

Intra-African investment

2

Domestic and intra-African public-private partnerships (PPPs), for example, to invest in infrastructure

3

Crowdfunding

4

African philanthropy

5

Pan-African / regional lotteries

6

African Angel Investors' Network

7

Leveraging the asset base of African institutional investors

8

Sovereign wealth funds

If required, AfCFTA will also seek external sources of funding and partner with international organizations, but only after all internal sources of finance are exhausted. External sources of finance may include:

1

Leveraging remittances and savings from the African diapora

2

Traditional official development assistance (ODA)

3

BRICS countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa), Arab world and other emerging partners

4

PPPs that guarantee value for money and debt sustainability

5

Philanthropic organizations and international NGOs

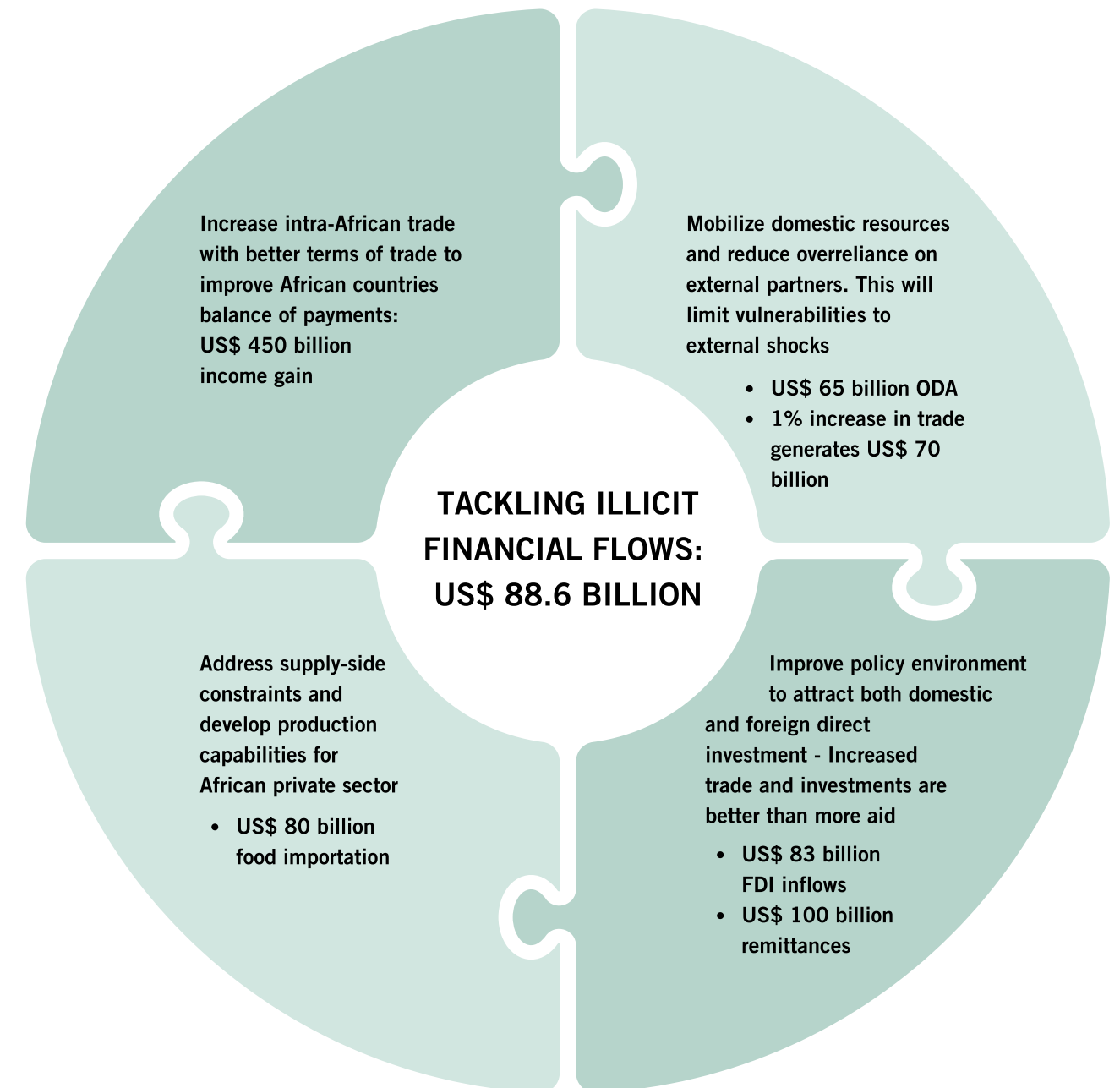
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Development-path based access to finance model for African and other developing countries

Recommendations

To conclude this remarks, Mr. Sebahizi proposed a set of recommendations for African stakeholders to successfully implement the AfCFTA. Figure 3 summarizes his recommendations.

Figure 3: Recommendations for mobilizing African stakeholders to implement the AfCFTA



First, the continent needs to increase trade. Trading freely within Africa has the potential to boost income by US\$450 billion. Second, African countries need to mobilize domestic resources and reduce reliance on external partners. Member states, development partners with Africa, African philanthropists can all contribute, even crowdfunding from the population for specific projects to benefit the continent. Harnessing internal resources will also act to protect countries from external shocks. He said:

The more you rely on others to feed you, the more you are left to their mercy, if they decide not to feed you. The more you are relying on capital from outside, if they decide to switch it off, then you start suffering.

Third, harmonizing regulations and creating a conducive environment for business will attract greater investment from both African and foreign investors and reduce the continent’s reliance on aid. Fourth, Africa must address supply-side constraints and build strong productive capacities to produce what it needs and reduce reliance on imports, especially for food.

Last, but not least, the continent must combat illicit financial flows. Africa is losing more than US\$88 billion annually. If successfully retained, these massive amounts being bled out of Africa illegally could be channeled towards the continent’s development.

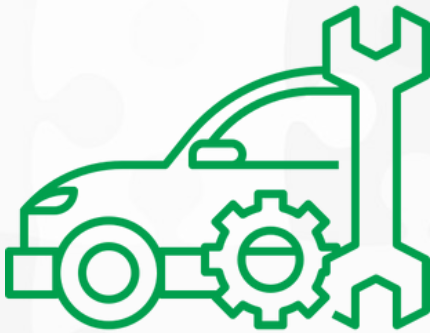
Mr. Sebahizi finished his presentation by highlighting the extraordinary benefits that the AfCFTA is predicted to bring to Africa. A report published by the World Economic Forum/AfCFTA Secretariat in January 2023 identified four high-potential sectors for rapid acceleration in production and trade under the AfCFTA: agriculture and agro-processing; automotive; pharmaceuticals; and transport and logistics. For example, intra-Africa trade in agriculture is expected to increase by 574 percent by 2030 if tariffs are eliminated under the AfCFTA. The agricultural sector offers vast opportunities for economic growth, job creation, poverty reduction and food security, with the potential for even more value added with agro-processing. Similarly, the automotive industry in Africa is expected to grow to more than \$42 billion by 2027 due to increasing domestic demand, rising incomes and high projections for intra-Africa trade.[3]

In sum, Mr. Sebahizi was convinced that Africa has all the necessary expertise and capabilities to run its economic affairs, and if the continent manages its own resources properly, it can take care of its economic development.

**HIGH-POTENTIAL SECTORS FOR RAPID ACCELERATION
IN PRODUCTION AND TRADE UNDER THE AFCFTA**



**AGRICULTURE AND
AGRO-PROCESSING**



AUTOMOTIVE



**TRANSPORT AND
LOGISTICS**



PHARMACEUTICALS

**According to a report published by the World Economic Forum/AfCFTA Secretariat in January 2023*

3 World Economic Forum and AfCFTA. 2023. AfCFTA: A New Era for Global Business and Investment in Africa. p. 5.



From L-R: Mr. Sebahizi, Mr. Nsekela, Hon. Hammond, and Dr. Gichuru.

Panel discussion

Moderator

Dr. Julie Gichuru, Head of Public Affairs and Communications, Mastercard Foundation

Panelists

- Hon. Kobina Tahiru Hammond, Minister of Trade and Industry, Ghana
- Mr. Abdulmajid Nsekela, Group CEO and Managing Director, CRDB Bank Plc
- Mr. Prudence Sebahizi, Director, Institutional Matters and Programmes Coordination, AfCFTA Secretariat

Ghana and the AfCFTA

To begin, Minister Hammond offered a brief historical perspective. The history of the continent has been a very difficult one; from colonization through independence to attempts by foreign powers to re-colonize Africa economically. The continent has tested various models, institutions and relationships to address issues of economic development and trade—bilateral, multilateral and regional communities like ECOWAS—but none have fully realized Africa’s aspirations. Hence, Africa’s leaders have developed the concept of the AfCFTA, an agreement by Africans for Africans, to harness the resources of the continent together.

In the case of Ghana, he felt that the initiative has started well. He said that a pilot involving eight countries, including Ghana, has commenced the process of intra-Africa trade. At the same time, the Government of Ghana under the leadership of President Nana Akufo-Addo is pursuing a policy

of industrialization to add value to its natural resources, not simply export raw materials. To this end, the Government has introduced the One District One Factory (1D1F) initiative to take advantage of natural resources within respective districts and achieve economies of scale. The goal is not just to extract/produce raw materials but transform them into manufactured goods. In the area of finance for natural resource production and agribusiness, the Government is working with a group of around 15 commercial banks led by the Ghana Exim Bank to reduce the barriers of finances available to the enterprises that are establishing factories in districts. It is not only facilitating the formalization of these businesses but also paying approximately 50 percent of the market interest rate charged by participating banks on start-up loans to these companies. In this way, companies can access more affordable finance for their operations.

Provision of long-term financing and capacity building for agribusiness

Continuing on the theme of finance, Mr. Nsekela stressed the need to support long-term financing for the agricultural sector. Until now, the banking sector views the provision of loans to agriculture as inherently risky; enterprises in the sector are often informal and the majority of farmers are not educated or engaged in modern methods of farming. But, for the AfCFTA to be successful, banks will need to move away from conventional thinking and design innovative financial instruments for agriculture, because each product and value chain has unique characteristics. To start, policymakers, banking regulators and commercial banks will need to collaborate to simplify access to finance and make it affordable. The challenge is that the majority of banks operate within short-term liquidity—hence raising funds is relatively more expensive—while the nature of the agricultural sector demands long-term funding.

Therefore, from a policy perspective, Mr. Nsekela suggested that governments will need to support long-term funding through some form of guarantee. Additionally, to reduce risks to the banking sector, policies will need to be stable, and prices for agricultural commodities will need to be determined by the market, not fixed by the government.

He described what was being done in Tanzania by CRDB Bank. In 2019, the bank was accredited by the United Nations Green Climate Fund (GCF) to provide loans for sustainable development projects in Tanzania of up to US\$250 million. He added that the bank's funding model includes four criteria: capacity building for the farmer, provision of guarantees to farmers to enable them to access funding, reduction of risk through insurance, and enhancement of technology to improve productivity.

Mr. Kadari Singo, CEO of UONGOZI Institute; and Ms. Jacqueline Mkindi, CEO of Tanzania Horticulture Association (TAHA), and Chairperson of Agricultural Council of Tanzania (ACT), echoed the point from Mr. Nsekela on the need for capacity building of farmers as a precursor to providing loans. But Ms Mkindi believed that it was a grave mistake to focus only on actors across the value chain. It is also critical to build the capacity of lenders—in banks and financial institutions—so that they better understand how the different value chains within agriculture operate because they all don't work the same. She also recommended that farmers need to understand other financial services, for example, insurance for crops and for cargo, so that they are better able to service their loans.

On the topic of capacity building, Mr. Nana Adofo Ofori, representing Dr. Afuah Asabea Asare, CEO of the Ghana Export Promotion Authority, described his organization's youth capacity-building initiative, whereby youth are matched up with established farmers to provide mentorship and training on the latest farming activities and how best to meet the international market. He recommended that this model could be adopted in other countries to improve farming and strengthen the agricultural sector. Mr. Kingsley Amoah, Executive Secretary of the Civil Society Coalition for African Continental Free Trade Area (CSC-AfCFTA), stressed the importance of farmer-based associations in building human capital in agribusiness through training farmers on irrigation and modern technology to upscale production.

Eng. Zena Said, Chief Secretary of the Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar, also recommended that extension officers could be better used to support smallholder farmers with expert advice on farming methods. Similarly, agricultural research institutions can be a source of knowledge and advice on the types of soil and kinds of crops which grow better in specific areas. Combined, these key stakeholders could valuably assist farmers to increase their productivity.

A multi-stakeholder approach to agricultural finance

With respect to finance, Dr. Fidelis Mwazi, CEO of the Namibian Agronomic Board (NAB), advised that loans for agriculture need to be based upon a thorough assessment of the production costs for individual crops. From his experience, allowing financial institutions to determine loans without the necessary relationships with farmers and input suppliers was a mistake. Critically, production costs determine what needs to be financed.

Therefore, his organization had developed a booklet for smallholder farmers to calculate the minimum amounts of money required to produce different crops. He also recommended a multi-stakeholder approach—including farmers, input suppliers, banks and other players—to unlock Africa's agricultural potential. He stressed that it is in the interests of all stakeholders for farmers to succeed in producing sufficient yields to not only break-even but also make a profit.

Ms. Victoria Sigauke from the Ministry of Industry and Commerce in Zimbabwe similarly recommended a tripartite relationship between the farmer, the banker, and input suppliers. Farmers do not have a monthly salary, but they earn their money by the cycle of harvest. Farmers require commodities at the input stage but have output as collateral that they can leverage to ensure they continue farming despite the short loan terms typically given at the bank. She suggested that commodity exchange markets, like the ones in Zimbabwe and Ghana, could valuably be extended regionally/continentally to provide a fairer, more stable market to farmers and reduce post-harvest losses.

Infrastructure

In comments from the audience, Mr. Ali Amour, Chairman of the Zanzibar Chamber of Commerce, considered that lack of infrastructure and connectivity within African countries was the main challenge to unlocking intra-Africa trade, especially in agriculture. Without infrastructure, African farmers will be unable to access markets or add value to their products.

Implementation of the AfCFTA will require the active engagement of a broad spectrum of stakeholders

Asked by the moderator who needed to be at the table for the AfCFTA to be successfully implemented, Minister Hammond said that a broad spectrum of stakeholders would be required, starting from the national executive through regional administrations to grassroots stakeholders in rural communities, including traditional rulers, who are the owners of land. Engaging traditional rulers will be essential if governments are seeking to acquire land for large-scale agricultural production.

Similarly, for finance and insurance, development banking institutions from the international and continental level (World Bank, AfDB, AfC) through to domestic commercial banks and other financial institutions will need to be involved. Collaboration with stakeholders in communications and transport infrastructure will also be essential to facilitate intra-Africa and international trade. From the earlier testimony of President Obasanjo and from his own experience, Minister Hammond said that transport arrangements, particularly shipping, need to be improved to enable the efficient flow of goods and services. Shipping routes and port services need to be better integrated to ensure proper linkages between countries and remove bottlenecks. On a positive note, he said that the customs service in Ghana had introduced some paperless transactions as part of upgrading its operations so particular processes can now be accomplished fairly quickly.

A change in mindset for success

Asked what was most needed for agribusiness on the continent to succeed, Mr. Nsekela replied that, first and foremost, a change of mindset was needed among all stakeholders along value chains—bankers, regulators, policymakers and farmers. He said:

There is no small farmer. He is small because he has not been enabled.

He agreed strongly with Dr. Mwazi from Namibia that collaboration was the path to solutions; if the needs of the farmer and the banker are brought together in the same room, that’s where risk starts to be reduced. Therefore, the issue becomes how to transform farmers to the next level? To achieve this outcome, Mr. Nsekela highlighted several factors:

- 1 Formalization of land;
- 2 Identification and support for areas with strong potential for production of specific crops;
- 3 Updating of banking policies and regulations to suit the present environment without jeopardizing compliance and governance, and to enable provision of innovative financial instruments like Letters of Credit (LCs); and
- 4 Promotion of productivity and market access, which will require both healthy competition and close collaboration among African countries especially given the difference in agricultural resources and capabilities between states.

Mr. Sebahizi agreed that a change in mindset was required. He said that people in Africa all too often talk about problems and find reasons why things cannot work. They rarely see opportunities. For example, traditional farming knowledge is frequently disregarded. He said:

One of my colleagues at university told me he thought his grandfather had a PhD in agriculture, because he had never seen any agricultural research that has addressed issues of agriculture better than his grandfather. So that's again, a mindset change. We have our knowledge. We can use it.

Similarly, Africa has its own financial resources but continues to be distracted by external factors. Countries lose sight of what is available within because they expect aid from overseas. Finally, most of the institutions that Africa is working with, including financial institutions, are not our own institutions. The continent needs to create its own institutions that can respond to Africa’s needs.

Women, youth and the AfCFTA

On the issue of youth, Mr. Sebahizi expressed his appreciation for President Obasanjo’s words of advice to young people during the plenary session yesterday: “Don’t listen to people who tell you that the future belongs to you. Because if you don’t own today, if you don’t own the present, then there is no future for you.”

He said that everything spoken about today related to making Africa a better place. Therefore, he suggested African countries should be talking to young Africans now, because they are the ones who will inherit everything that is achieved.

Mr. Nsekela was strongly supportive of efforts to empower women. From the banking perspective, innovative financing and saving instruments are needed to fit their needs as well as capacity building programmes to give them the knowledge and tools to manage their businesses and keep the accounts. Ongoing efforts are also needed for women to access markets. For example, almost all banks in Tanzania have been linking women with international organizations to provide exposure for their products and services. He related that women are most often leading not only as farmers but also small business entrepreneurs. Therefore, CRDB Bank created a foundation to provide both capacity building and seed capital because women often did not qualify for traditional loans. He added that the government was also providing support through dedicated programmes focusing on youth and women.

Mr. Sebahizi went further. He said:

If you give women equal opportunities as men, they will always shine. And I'm very much convinced that women they are much smarter than men on all grounds.

He related a conversation that he had with a former Member of Parliament from Kenya. She told him that, as a widow, she was not able to secure a bank loan for her business; at every point and on every form, the bank required someone else to co-sign for the loan. This was despite being a former MP and able to provide collateral for the loan.

Therefore, Mr. Sebahizi stressed that the biggest problem facing women that required change was the regulatory environment in African states to provide women with equal opportunities. In some countries, girls are still denied the same access to education as boys.

Summarizing the session, Dr. Gichuru left delegates to the Forum with a closing challenge:

What I've heard, there are many stakeholders needed ... at the table ... We must collaborate. We must listen. We must understand. We must localize approaches. We must look at what makes sense for Africa. We must build new models of work to make all this work. It's going to be a lot. But let me leave us with this. If we don't do it, who will?

CLOSING REMARKS BY H.E. HAILEMARIAM DESALEGN BOSHE, FORMER PRIME MINISTER OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF ETHIOPIA

In closing the Forum, on behalf of all participants, Prime Minister Boshe expressed his sincere gratitude to H.E. President Akufo-Addo for hosting the meeting and for the exceptional generosity and hospitality of the Ghanaian people. He also extended his appreciation to all former heads of state and government, in particular, H.E. President Kikwete for his continued contribution to the development of the African continent. Equally importantly, special thanks were given to all delegates for their contributions, which made the sessions highly engaging, informative and interactive.

He said that the Forum had not only reminded participants of the importance of maximizing Africa’s agricultural potential, but also the role of intra-Africa trade to realize Africa as a strong and united continent, and influential global player and partner. He stressed the need for all countries to become productive and promote trade among themselves, particularly in the agricultural sector, where most African countries have a comparative advantage. To this end, he expressed gratitude that the AfCFTA agreement under the leadership of H.E. Secretary-General Mene, was in place. So far, their tireless efforts to promote intra-Africa trade were to be commended. He agreed with President Akufo-Addo that the introduction of the AfCFTA represented one of the most important

and landmark decisions taken by Africa’s leaders, and the engagement, information and interactive deliberations during the Forum have underscored the great potential of AfCFTA to enable the free flow of goods and services across the continent and boost the trading position of Africa in global markets. He said:

We should therefore remain optimistic that an increase in trade is the surest way to deepen regional integration in Africa. It will mean a rapid increase in the exchange of agricultural, industrial, financial, scientific and technological products, which would significantly enhance our economic fortunes, as a continent, create prosperity and provide opportunities for employment for the broad masses of Africans, particularly our youth.

He ended with note of thanks to all distinguished delegates for their participation, for the stellar work of President Kikwete as Patron of the Forum and to Secretary-General Mene for working hard day and night to ensure that AfCFTA commenced operations as planned. He further congratulated his fellow African former presidents in attendance for continuing to serve the continent in different arrangements even after their retirement. He assured them that their contributions were highly appreciated.

Likewise, he recognized the presence of representatives from business, whose ideas and experience added significant value to the discussions, and commended the hard work done by the Chief Executive Officer of UONGOZI Institute, Mr. Kadari Singo, and his staff and team to make this Forum a success. Last, but not least, Prime Minister Desalegn extended his thanks to all sponsors of the Forum. Their financial knowledge and the material support to make the Africa Leadership Forum 2023 a reality were recognized, appreciated and well documented.

Your Excellencies, distinguished delegates, on this note, I hereby declare the African Leadership Forum officially closed. I wish you a safe travels back home and Almighty God bless you all, and our continent Africa.



STATEMENT OF THE AFRICAN LEADERSHIP FORUM 2023

The seventh African Leadership Forum (ALF) was held in Accra, Ghana, from 25 – 26 May 2023, under the theme “Promoting Intra-Africa Trade to Unlock Agricultural Potential in Africa”. The forum was convened by H.E. Dr. Jakaya Kikwete, ALF Patron and Former President of the United Republic of Tanzania, and H.E. Wamkele Mene, Secretary-General of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Secretariat. The organisation of the forum was managed by UONGOZI Institute in collaboration with the AfCFTA Secretariat.

H.E. Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, President of the Republic of Ghana, attended as a guest of honour.

The delegates of the forum included H.E. Olusegun Obasanjo, Former President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria; H.E. Dr. Mohamed Moncef Marzouki, Former President of the Republic of Tunisia; H.E. Dr Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, Former President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria; H.E. Thomas Boni Yayi, Former President of the Republic of Benin; H.E. Hailemariam Desalegn Boshe, Former Prime Minister of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia; and H.E. Dr. Ernest Bai Koroma, Former President of the Republic of Sierra Leone. Other delegates were leaders from all parts of the continent – and from a range of professions in government, business, academia and civil society.

Similar to previous forums, this year’s ALF was organised over a day-and-a-half period with an opening plenary and closed sessions.

The closed sessions were held under Chatham House Rules to encourage frank, open and in-depth discussion. Dr. Anselme Vodounhessi, Programme Coordinator (The Common African Agro-Parks) of the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa; Dr. Frannie Léautier, Senior Partner and CEO, Southbridge Investments; and Mr. Prudence Sebahizi, Director, Institutional Matters and Programmes Coordination, AfCFTA Secretariat delivered presentations in the closed sessions.

The forum sought to provide a space to share experiences and insights to promote successful and sustainable agricultural trade among African countries. The key objectives of the Forum were to:

- 1 Highlight Africa’s agricultural potential and opportunities emerging from climate change;
- 2 Share experiences and lessons on the obstacles (internal and international) in maximizing agricultural potential in Africa;
- 3 Discuss the potential and obstacles to, as well as practical and realistic requirements for, implementing AfCFTA within Africa’s agriculture context; and
- 4 Identify priorities and a roadmap for implementation of the agricultural trade perspective under the AfCFTA to realize its transformative economic objective.

Under the overarching theme the forum considered three sub-themes, namely unlocking agricultural potential in Africa, the market as a driver for fostering agricultural productivity in Africa, and mobilising African stakeholders to ensure a successful implementation of the AfCFTA.

Participants recognised that Africa is a continent of unlimited opportunities, growing optimism and a growing youth population. Political stability, collective political will, and political actions are seen as foundations for transforming intra-Africa trade. They went on to acknowledge that ALF 2023 was convened when the agriculture sector in Africa is under pressure from geopolitical conflicts, climate change, and the legacy of COVID-19. Such external shocks have exposed Africa to economic and food vulnerability. The continent cannot continue to be defined by such shocks.

The launch of AfCFTA was seen as a “game changer” in driving the trade integration agenda in Africa, creating the world’s largest free market, and ultimately setting the stage for industrialization and prosperity. To maximise returns from what it already possesses (such as valuable agricultural commodities), it was recognised that Africa needs to collectively focus on addressing constraints to sustainable development.

It was emphasised that “agribusiness” rather than “agriculture” should drive policy development and implementation. As many factors are at play, agri-business encompasses agriculture simultaneously with related economic activities. As such, a multifaceted approach will involve multiple stakeholders, including ministries beyond that of agriculture, in contributing to agricultural/agribusiness development.

On climate change, the forum considered the current and future impacts of climate change to be a wake-up call for Africa to reorient its agriculture development agenda. Many best practices that have transformed parts of the African agriculture sector are valuable learning opportunities while there is also scaling up opportunities for best practices. Interventions to mitigate climate change can include agri-tech, innovation in adopting climate-smart technologies, and new science-based farming practices that promote resilient and sustainable farming and food security. Complementary non-technology interventions can include evidence-based policymaking, accessing climate change financing, and advocating for compensation from large polluters.

On access to finance for agriculture, the forum recognised that access to affordable financing instruments (credit, insurance and savings) can drive increasing private sector participation in the agriculture sector. This will necessitate policies that de-risk lending to the sector (formalising agricultural land, introducing land banks).

Beyond regulating the banking sector and management of monetary policy, the central banks have an important role in driving innovative financing, among which is carbon trade financing. The central banks also have a role in incentivising regional and local banks to syndicate large loan portfolios for the sector.

Participants noted the role of African governments in incentivising market entry for venture capital funding, insurance products, trade financing and commodity markets. The latter can start with commodities that Africa largely consumes.

Intermediary finance products, such as guarantees, have proven successful as well. Other financing instruments that are of development significance include savings and credit societies, government subsidized lending rates, specialized agriculture investment banks, and special credit facilities that cater for the needs of women and youth.

Subsidies remain a relevant policy intervention. However, they can divert resources away from competing development areas. They are also unlikely to reach all in need. The ALF understands that Africa will need to transition from subsidies to a commercial-based, financial ecosystem in the future. Policies need to promote market-driven solutions and be wary of market interventions, including price settings.

The forum encouraged commercial banks to be innovative in an environment where the agriculture sector is characterized by informality and unstructured business relationships and dominated by low-income earners who struggle to meet standard bank requirements. Lending to smallholder farmers can be attached to capacity building, advisory services (including skills in liquidity management), new technology adoption, and grant components. All these align with the characteristics of smallholder farmers. Regulations also need to be responsive to the varying dynamics between and within sectors.

On access to markets, despite increasing global preference for African agricultural products, participants were conscious that access to markets remains a challenging experience. Efforts can be directed towards investing in advisory services to smallholder farmers, plant health measures and physical and information infrastructure that enhance interconnectivity. It was proposed that complex trade logistics can be simplified by embracing new technology solutions.

Such technologies include Artificial Intelligence (AI), robotics, and digital long-distance communication. Without degrading the importance of access to finance, infrastructure deficiency was seen as the leading binding constraint to intra-Africa trade.

The forum urged that African countries, with differences in capability, should avoid the sentiment of who will be the “winners and losers” in reforming their trade sector to meet AfCFTA objectives. Countries need to commit to trading among themselves, invest in knowledge exchange and trade facilitation (modernize custom systems and associated operations, such as paperless processes). Such efforts have the potential to sustain the entry of rural communities into the regional and global value chains.

Robust private sector capacity in responding to trade opportunities was seen as vital in transforming intra-Africa trade. Governments can identify, incentivize, and facilitate large private sector entities to invest in agriculture. Such efforts need to be complemented by capacity development for all actors along the value chains (including banks and regulators). Banks, for instance, tend to, incorrectly consider all value chains as homogeneous.

Participants believed that specialisation in value chains at the continental level and even within countries will revolutionize productivity. Value chain mapping will inform the market on geographical areas where production is more efficient and competitive, which in turn should also facilitate the movement of capital. However, trade liberalization should not allow the smuggling of goods from outside Africa.

In terms of development cooperation with partners, the forum proposed that Africa needs to synchronize development cooperation by prioritizing projects that raise productivity capacities rather than food aid and emergency supplies. Capacity was considered in terms of infrastructure development (transport, water, and energy), and access to finance, including finnovation, digital finance, blockchain technology, as well as the introduction and expansion of commodity and capital markets. Support to capacity development needs to prioritise value addition to the existing agricultural exports, as well as extending the trade arrangements. This includes the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), which can potentially advance specialisation within the African textile value chain.

It was appreciated that implementation of AfCFTA objectives requires significant resources. Consideration needs to be given to leveraging partners and diverse instruments for resource mobilization. Reference was made to intra-Africa investment; crowdfunding; philanthropy; and regional lotteries. Consideration was also given to improving the policy environment to attract domestic and foreign direct investment; increasing intra-Africa trade with better terms of trade for improved balance of payments; mobilising domestic resources; addressing supply-side constraints. Developing productive capacities (human capital, natural capital, energy etc.) and tackling illicit financial flows were also seen within the context of resource mobilisation.

APPENDIX A: LIST OF DELEGATES

S/N	NAME	POSITION/ORGANISATION	COUNTRY
1	H.E. Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo	President of the Republic of Ghana	Ghana
2	H.E. Dr. Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete	ALF Patron and Former President of the United Republic of Tanzania	Tanzania
3	H.E. Olusegun Obasanjo	Former President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria	Nigeria
4	H.E. Dr.Mohamed Moncef Marzouki	Former President of the Republic of Tunisia	Tunisia
5	H.E. Dr.Goodluck Ebele Jonathan	Former President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria	Nigeria
6	H.E. Thomas Boni Yayi	Former President of the Republic of Benin	Benin
7	H.E. Hailemariam Desalegn Boshe	Former Prime Minister of the Federal Democratic of Ethiopia	Ethiopia
8	H.E. Dr. Ernest Bai Koroma	Former President of the Republic of Sierra Leone	Sierra Leone
9	H.E. Wamkele Mene	Secretary General of the African Continental Free Trade Area Secretariat	Ghana
10	Mr. Kadari Singo	UONGOZI Institute	Tanzania
11	Eng. Zena Said	The Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar	Tanzania
12	Mr. Abdirahman Hassan	Rahisi Solution Limited	Tanzania
13	H.E. Abdoul Kader Toure	Embassy of Mali in Ghana	Ghana
14	Mr. Abdulmajid Nsekela	CRDB Bank Plc	Tanzania
15	Ms. Abena Osei-Poku	Absa Bank	Ghana
16	H.E. Aboubacar S. Barry	Embassy of Senegal in Ghana	Ghana

S/N	NAME	POSITION/ORGANISATION	COUNTRY
17	Mr. Adisu Adinew Adanike	Office of Former Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn	Ethiopia
18	Mr. Adomako Osei-Frimpong	GCB Bank PLC	Ghana
19	Ms. Aichatou Salifou	Ainoma Ferme Semenciere	Niger
20	H.E. Dr. Aisa Kirabo Kacyira	High Commission of Rwanda in Ghana	Ghana
21	Mr. Akida Kilango	UONGOZI Institute	Tanzania
22	Hon. Alan John Kyerematen	Former Minister of Trade and Industry	Ghana
23	Mr. Alassai Tigri	Office of Former President Thomas Boni Yayi	Benin
24	Mr. Alex Dadey	KGL Group of Companies	Ghana
25	H.E. Dr. Alhousseini Ousmane	Embassy of Niger in Ghana	Ghana
26	Mr. Ali Suleiman Amour	Zanzibar National Chamber of Commerce	Tanzania
27	Mr. Ally Gugu	Dodoma Municipality	Tanzania
28	Mr. Alton Chaula	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and East African Cooperation	Tanzania
29	Amb. Ami Mpungwe	Tanzania Chamber of Minerals and Energy	Tanzania
30	Mr. Amon Nyahada	Embassy of Zimbabwe in Ghana	Ghana
31	Mr. Andrews Adu Osei	GCB Bank PLC	Ghana
32	Mr. Anoh Hyacithe Assemien	African Continental Free Trade Area Secretariat	Ghana
33	Dr. Anselme Vodounhessi	The Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa	Burkina Faso
34	Mr. Atom Edward Lim	Office of Former President Olusegun Obasanjo	Nigeria
35	Ms. Atupele Mwakalinga	The African Capacity Building Foundation	Ghana

S/N	NAME	POSITION/ORGANISATION	COUNTRY
36	Mr. Augustine Maurice	Office of Former President Olusegun Obasanjo	Nigeria
37	H.E. Augusto Da Silva Cunha	Embassy of Angola in Ghana	Ghana
38	H.E. Awoki Panassa	Embassy of Togo Lomé in Ghana	Ghana
39	Ms. Balkissa Alfa Hassan Sido Kabo	African Continental Free Trade Area Secretariat	Ghana
40	H.E. Benson Bana	Tanzania High Commission in Nigeria	Nigeria
41	Ms. Bilha Musima	Mastercard Foundation	Kenya
42	Mr. Brian Gilpin	Office of Former President Ernest Bai Koroma	Sierra Leone
43	Hon. Dr. Bryan Acheampong	Ministry of Food and Agriculture	Ghana
44	Ms. Caroline Israel	UONGOZI Institute	Tanzania
45	Mr. Charles Mwankupili	President's Office – State House	Tanzania
46	Mr. Chrianah Dakwa	Ministry of Industry and Commerce	Zimbabwe
47	Mr. Chukwumerije Okereke	Office of Former President Goodluck Jonathan	Nigeria
48	H.E. Dampsey Bediako Asare	Ghana High Commission in Kenya	Kenya
49	Mr. Daniel Nii Kwei-Kumah Sackey	Ecobank	Ghana
50	Ms. Demitta Gyang	African Continental Free Trade Area Secretariat	Ghana
51	Mr. Deogratias Usangira	UONGOZI Institute	Tanzania
52	Ms. Diana Ogwal Akullo Oyena	African Continental Free Trade Area Secretariat	Ghana
53	Mr. Dominic Adu	FNB Bank	Ghana
54	Mr. Ebenezer Nana Boateng	Boramic Ghana Limited	Ghana

S/N	NAME	POSITION/ORGANISATION	COUNTRY
55	H.E. Eliphas Barine	High Commission of Kenya in Ghana	Ghana
56	Mr. Eliud Manase	UONGOZI Institute	Tanzania
57	Mr. Elvis Blewube	African Continental Free Trade Area Secretariat	Ghana
58	Ms. Elydora Matubanzila	African Continental Free Trade Area Secretariat	Ghana
59	H.E. Emad Magdy Hanna	Embassy of Egypt in Ghana	Ghana
60	Mr. Emanoel Alfred	UONGOZI Institute	Tanzania
61	Ms. Emily Mburi Ndoria	African Continental Free Trade Area Secretariat	Ghana
62	Dr. Emmanuel Maliti	UONGOZI Institute	Tanzania
63	Hon. Eric Mwangi	Kenya Young Parliamentarians	Kenya
64	Mr. Ernest Ansah Lartey	Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre	Ghana
65	Mrs. Esther Adebola Arewa	High Commission of Nigeria in Ghana	Ghana
66	Ms. Faizah Atu Muhammad	Winner – Youth Leadership Competition	Nigeria
67	Mr. Felix Baidoo	MasterCard Foundation	Ghana
68	Dr. Fidelis Nyambe Mwazi	Namibian Agronomic Board	Namibia
69	Mr. Filbert Mponzi	NMB Bank Plc	Tanzania
70	Ms. Flavia Busingye	East African Community	Tanzania
71	Prof. Fortunata Makene	UONGOZI Institute	Tanzania
72	Dr. Frannie Léautier	SouthBridge Investments	France
73	Ms. Franya Cabral-Ruiz	Office of Former President Ernest Bai Koroma	Sierra Leone

S/N	NAME	POSITION/ORGANISATION	COUNTRY
74	Mr. Gabriel Edgal	Oakwood Green Capital	Ghana
75	Ms. Gainmore Zanamwe	AfreximBank	Ghana
76	H.E. Genevieve A. Kennedy	Embassy of Liberia in Ghana	Ghana
77	Mr. Gilberto Antonio	African Continental Free Trade Area Secretariat	Ghana
78	Mr. Giselle Vodegbeton	African Continental Free Trade Area Secretariat	Ghana
79	Dr. Goodwill Wanga	Tanzania National Business Council	Tanzania
80	Mrs. Grace Khoza	African Continental Free Trade Area Secretariat	Ghana
81	Ms. Halima Mwinyi	The Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar	Tanzania
82	Mr. Hammou aissa	African Continental Free Trade Area Secretariat	Ghana
83	Mr. Henry C. Onwuzurigbo	Zenith Bank	Ghana
84	Mr. Ian Mashingaidze	The African Capacity Building Foundation	Ghana
85	H.E. Icsus Mba Bela Abaha	Embassy of Equatorial Guinea in Ghana	Ghana
86	Ms. Iina Soiri	UONGOZI Institute	South Africa
87	Mr. Ikechukwu Eze	Office of Former President Goodluck Jonathan	Nigeria
88	Mr. Imad Daimi	Office of Former President Moncef Marzouki	Tunisia
89	Ms. Iman Tassama	CRDB Bank Plc	Tanzania
90	H.E. Mrs. Imane Ouadil	Embassy of Morocco in Ghana	Ghana
91	Mr. Imani Nsamila	UONGOZI Institute	Tanzania
92	H.E. Ingrid Mollestad	Norwegian Ambassador	Ghana

S/N	NAME	POSITION/ORGANISATION	COUNTRY
93	Mr. Innocent Matekere	Winner – Youth Leadership Competition	Tanzania
94	Mr. Isaac Masusu	NMB Bank Plc	Tanzania
95	Mr. Iyonu Ann Jibrin	Office of Former President Goodluck Jonathan	Nigeria
96	Dr. Jacqueline Nkindi	Tanzania Horticulture Association	Tanzania
97	Mr. Jambo Ramadhani	UONGOZI Institute	Tanzania
98	Ms. Jaqueline Hindjou	High Commission of Namibia in Ghana	Ghana
99	Prof. Jean Jacques Mbonigaba Muhinda	Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA)	Kenya
100	Mr. Jerry Adjololo	Domotale Africa	Ghana
101	Ms. Joanita Magongo	UONGOZI Institute	Tanzania
102	Hon. Joseph Boahen Aidoo	Ghana Cocoa Board	Ghana
103	Ms. Josephine Okot	Victoria Seeds Limited	Rwanda
104	Mr. Jude D. Tetteh	Digicraft Ghana	Ghana
105	Dr. Julie Gichuru	Mastercard Foundation	Kenya
106	Mr. Kilo Mgaya	CRDB Bank Plc	Tanzania
107	Mr. Kingsley Amoah	Civil Society Coalition for African Continental Free Trade Area	Ghana
108	Ms. Kimwisho Mndolwa	Office of Former President Jakaya Kikwete	Tanzania
109	Ms. Klenam Normanyo	African Continental Free Trade Area Secretariat	Ghana
110	Hon. Kobina Tahiru Hammond	Ministry of Trade and Industry	Ghana
111	Mr. Kojo Annan	Businessman	Ghana

S/N	NAME	POSITION/ORGANISATION	COUNTRY
112	Hon. Kojo Oppong Nkrumah	Ministry of Information	Ghana
113	Mr. Komla Prosper Bissi	African Continental Free Trade Area Secretariat	Ghana
114	H.E. Kufa E. Chinoza	Embassy of Zimbabwe in Ghana	Ghana
115	Mr. Kwaku T. Danso-Misa	Digicraft Ghana	Ghana
116	Mr. Kweku Ahiagble	MasterCard Foundation	Ghana
117	Dr. Kwesi Humprey Ayim ADarke	Association of Ghana Industry	Ghana
118	Mr. Lawrence Agyinsam	Ghana Exim Bank	Ghana
119	Ms. Lilian Kissamba	NMB Bank Plc	Tanzania
120	Mrs. Linda Ampah	SanfordSeed	Ghana
121	Ms. Linda Manu	UONGOZI Institute	Tanzania
122	H.E. Lulu Xingwana	High Commission of South Africa in Ghana	Ghana
123	Ms. Maïmouna Sidibé	Faso Kaba	Mali
124	Ms. Maria Kinyonge	UONGOZI Institute	Tanzania
125	Mrs. Maria Theresa Mkenda	Africa Fertilizer Financing Mechanism Secretariat	Cote d'Ivoire
126	Ms. Marie Clarise Avore Bekale	African Continental Free Trade Area Secretariat	Ghana
127	H.E. Marie-Jeanne Wayikani Ukurango	Embassy of the Democratic Republic of Congo in Ghana	Ghana
128	Mr. Medard Ngaiza	Office of Former President Jakaya Kikwete	Tanzania
129	Ms. Memory Dube	Africa Development Bank	Ghana
130	Ms. Mercy Nanjala Manywe	African Continental Free Trade Area Secretariat	Ghana

S/N	NAME	POSITION/ORGANISATION	COUNTRY
131	Mr. Michael Ansah	Ghana Integrated Aluminium Development Corporation	Ghana
132	Hon. Michael Okyere	Ministry for Trade and Industry	Ghana
133	H.E. Mike A. Ocquaye	Ghana Freezones Authority	Ghana
134	Mr. Mikidad Khamis	Office of Former President Jakaya Kikwete	Tanzania
135	Ms. Modesta Yuoni Addison	AfCFTA Young Entrepreneurs Federation	Ghana
136	H.E. Mohamed Abdelrahman Yasin Mohamed	Embassy of Sudan in Ghana	Ghana
137	Mr. Mohamed Ali	African Continental Free Trade Area Secretariat	Ghana
138	Mr. Mohamed Sidi Bachir	Embassy of Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic in Ghana	Ghana
139	Mr. Mohammed Ibrahim	COMNET	Tanzania
140	Dr. Moudjib Djinadou	United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel	Senegal
141	Mzwakhe Lubisi	High Commission of South Africa in Ghana	Ghana
142	Ms. Nadia Amoako-Gyampah	African Continental Free Trade Area Secretariat	Ghana
143	Mr. Nahom Eskinder Abera	Office of Former Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn	Ethiopia
144	Ms. Namwaka Omary	UONGOZI Institute	Tanzania
145	Mr. Nana Adofo Ofori	Ghana Export Promotion Authority	Ghana
146	Ms. Nana Nyambita	Shell Tanzania	Tanzania
147	Dr. Ngomo Leopold Auguste	African Continental Free Trade Area Secretariat	Ghana
148	Mr. Nixon Manda	Winner – Youth Leadership Competition	Cameroon
149	Dr. Nnko Kanaeli	Tanzania Agriculture Development Bank	Tanzania

S/N	NAME	POSITION/ORGANISATION	COUNTRY
150	Mr. Odunayo Omotosho	Sahel Consulting Agriculture and Nutrition Limited	Nigeria
151	Mr. Olawole Nasser Yayi	Office of Former President Thomas Boni Yayi	Benin
152	H.E. Olga Syradin	Embassy of Guinea in Ghana	Ghana
153	Hon. Omar Said Shaabani	Ministry of Trade and Industrial Development, Zanzibar	Tanzania
154	Mr. Omoboyede Olusanya	Flour Mills of Nigeria	Nigeria
155	Mr. Omomotimi Otutu	Office of Former President Goodluck Jonathan	Nigeria
156	Mr. Onwuka Dabeluchukwu Chiemelie	Winner – Youth Leadership Competition	Nigeria
157	Mr. Orton Kiishweko	UONGOZI Institute	Tanzania
158	Mr. Osagyefou Amoatia Ofori Panin	Okyenhene	Ghana
159	Mr. Otwasuom Osae Nyampong VI	Genser Energy	Ghana
160	Mr. Ovide Massangya	Office of Former President Jakaya Kikwete	Tanzania
161	Mr. Parvis Danu	Office of Former President Ernest Bai Koroma	Sierra Leone
162	Mr. Patricia Kwasi-Kumah	GCB Bank PLC	Ghana
163	Mr. Patrick Tuluzawu	Ministry of Industry and Commerce	Zimbabwe
164	Mr. Patrick Yaw Nimo	Ministry of Trade and Industry	Ghana
165	Mr. Paul Mensa	African Continental Free Trade Area Secretariat	Ghana
166	Hon. Peter Salasya	Committee on Agriculture and Livestock and Fisheries	Kenya
167	Mrs. Phyllis Chuma-Chilembe	High Commission of Zambia in Ghana	Ghana
168	Dr. Pierre-Justin Kouka	Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Programme – African Union	Ethiopia

S/N	NAME	POSITION/ORGANISATION	COUNTRY
169	H.E. Pingrenoma Zegre	Embassy of Burkina Faso in Ghana	Ghana
170	Ms. Priscilla Adjubel	Premium Hub	Ghana
171	Mr. Prudence Sebahizi	African Continental Free Trade Area Secretariat	Ghana
172	Ms. Queen Uroki	NMB Bank Plc	Tanzania
173	Dr. Regan Massawe	Office of Former President Jakaya Kikwete	Tanzania
174	H.E. Regassa Kefale Ere	Embassy of Ethiopia in Ghana	Ghana
175	Maj. Gen. Richard Addo Gyane	Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre	Ghana
176	Mr. Richard Dugbartey	GCB Bank PLC	Ghana
177	Prof. Ruth K. Oniang'o	Journal of Food, Agriculture, Nutrition and Development (AJFAND)	Kenya
178	Mr. Sadiq Usman	Flour Mills of Nigeria	Nigeria
179	Mr. Saleh Ahmed	UONGOZI Institute	Tanzania
180	Dr. Salim Hamad	Ministry of Trade and Industrial Development, Zanzibar	Tanzania
181	Mr. Sam Aidoo	Ghana Commercial Bank	Ghana
182	Mr. Sami Ben Amara	Office of Former President Moncef Marzouki	Tunisia
183	Ms. Sandra Snowden	Hendy Farms	Ghana
184	Mr. Sanni Hallil	African Continental Free Trade Area Secretariat	Ghana
185	Hon. Sekai Nzenza	Ministry of Industry and Commerce	Zimbabwe
186	Mr. Selorm Adadevoh	MTN	Ghana
187	Ms. Seyram Agbemenya	The African Capacity Building Foundation	Ghana

S/N	NAME	POSITION/ORGANISATION	COUNTRY
188	Mr. Sheriff Ismail	Office of Former President Ernest Bai Koroma	Sierra Leone
189	Hon. Shirley Ayorkor Botchwey	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration	Ghana
190	Prof. Sidi Osho	Sidi Osho Foundation	Nigeria
191	Mr. Siita Sofo Hlssan	AfCFTA Young Entrepreneurs Federation	Ghana
192	Mr. Silver Ojakol	African Continental Free Trade Area Secretariat	Ghana
193	Mr. Simon Shayo	Geita Gold Mining	Tanzania
194	Ms. Sithandweyinkosi Sivela	Winner – Youth Leadership Competition	Zimbabwe
195	Mr. Smael Banse	VEINS-SAS	France
196	Mr. Sonny Kwaku Opoku	GCB Bank PLC	Ghana
197	Ms. Stella Onyinyechitho Thomas	Tecni Seeds Limited	Nigeria
198	Mr. Stephen Analo	East African Community	Tanzania
199	Mr. Stephen Analo	East African Community	Tanzania
200	Ms. Susan Mlawi	UONGOZI Institute	Tanzania
201	Ms. Suzana Aroko	UONGOZI Institute	Tanzania
202	Ms. Svodai Muzenda	Embassy of Zimbabwe in Ghana	Ghana
203	Mr. Swedi Kisokile	Office of Former President Jakaya Kikwete	Tanzania
204	Mr. Themba Rikhotso	Land Bank	South Africa
205	Mr. Theodore Daniel Laryea	GCB Bank PLC	Ghana
206	H.E. Tiemoko Moriko	Embassy of Ivory Coast in Ghana	Ghana

S/N	NAME	POSITION/ORGANISATION	COUNTRY
207	Ms. Vera Osei-Bonsu	Start Right Nutrition Limited	Ghana
208	Ms. Victoria Sigauke	Ministry of Industry and Commerce	Zimbabwe
209	Mr. Wilbert Kitima	Office of Former President Jakaya Kikwete	Tanzania
210	Ms. Yafika Chitanda	African Continental Free Trade Area Secretariat	Ghana
211	Mr. Yaw Frimpong Addo	Ministry of Food and Agriculture	Ghana
212	Mr. Yoseph Mamo	African Continental Free Trade Area Secretariat	Ghana
213	H.E. Youssef Delileche	Embassy of Algeria in Ghana	Ghana
214	Ms. Zalissa Sawadogo	AnBaloso	Burkina Faso

APPENDIX B: AGENDA OF THE FORUM

Day 1 | Thursday 25 May, 2023

8:00 - 10:00AM	ARRIVAL, REGISTRATION AND TEA
8:00 - 9:30AM	Special Leaders' Breakfast
10:00 - 10:05AM	NATIONAL AND AU ANTHEMS
10:05 - 10:20AM	OPENING REMARKS H.E. Dr. Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete, ALF Patron and Former President of the United Republic of Tanzania
10:20 - 10:40AM	KEYNOTE ADDRESS H.E. Wamkele Mene, Secretary-General, AfCFTA Secretariat
10:40 - 10:45AM	ENTERTAINMENT
10:45 - 11:15	OFFICIAL OPENING H.E. Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, President of the Republic of Ghana
11:15 - 12:30PM	PLENARY SESSION Promoting intra-Africa trade to unlock agricultural potential in Africa <i>Panelists</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">H.E. Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, President of the Republic of GhanaH.E. Olusegun Obasanjo, Former President of the Federal Republic of NigeriaH.E. Dr. Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete, ALF Patron and Former President of the United Republic of TanzaniaH.E. Hailemariam Desalegn Boshe, Former Prime Minister of the Federal Republic of EthiopiaH.E. Wamkele Mene, Secretary-General, AfCFTA SecretariatMr. Abdulmajid Nsekela, Group CEO and Managing Director, CRDB Bank Plc <i>Moderator</i> Dr. Julie Gichuru, Head of Public Affairs and Communications, Mastercard Foundation

12:30 - 13:45PM	GROUP PHOTO, LUNCH BREAK AND BUSINESS LEADERS' MEETING
13:45 - 15:15PM	SESSION I Unlocking agricultural potential in Africa <i>Presenter</i> Dr. Anselme Vodounhessi, Programme Coordinator (The Common African Agro-Parks), The Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa <i>Panelists</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">H.E. Dr. Mohamed Moncef Marzouki, Former President of the Republic of TunisiaH.E. Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, Former President of the Federal Republic of NigeriaMr. Ally Gugu, Former Deputy Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Trade and Industry, TanzaniaDr. Jean Jacques Mbonigaba Muhinda, Regional Manager for East Africa, Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) <i>Moderator</i> Mr. Jerry Adjololo, Managing Director, Domotale Africa
15:15 - 15:30PM	BREAK
15:30 - 17:00PM	SESSION II Market as a driver for fostering agricultural productivity in Africa <i>Presenter</i> Dr. Frannie Léautier, Senior Partner and CEO, Southbridge Investments <i>Panelists</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">H.E. Thomas Boni Yayi, Former President of the Republic of BeninH.E. Dr. Ernest Bai Koroma, Former President of the Republic of Sierra LeoneHon. Dr. Bryan Acheampong, Minister of Food and Agriculture, Ghana <i>Moderator</i> Mr. Jerry Adjololo, Managing Director, Domotale Africa
19:30 - 22:00PM	GALA DINNER AND AWARD CEREMONY

Gala Dinner and Award Ceremony | Thursday 25 May, 2023

19:30 - 19:50PM	ARRIVAL Invited guests
19:50 - 20:00PM	Former Heads of State and Government, and the President of the Republic of Ghana
20:00 - 20:05PM	NATIONAL ANTHEM
20:05 - 20:10PM	OPENING REMARKS H.E. Dr. Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete, ALF Patron and Former President of the United Republic of Tanzania
20:10 - 20:15PM	BRIEF ADDRESS H.E. Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, President of the Republic of Ghana
20:15 - 21:15PM	DINNER AND MUSICAL INTERLUDE
21:15 – 21:45PM	AWARD CEREMONY FOR WINNERS OF THE YOUTH LEADERSHIP COMPETITION 2023
	21:15 - 20:20 Introducing the winners of the competition: Mr. Kadari Singo, CEO of UONGOZI Institute
	21:20 – 21:25 Awarding the 4th – 1st runners-up: Former heads of state and government
	21:25 – 21:30 Awarding the overall winner: President Akufo-Addo
	21:30 – 21:35 A group photo of President Akufo-Addo, Former Presidents, Secretary-General of the AfCFTA Secretariat, and competition winners
	21:35 – 20:45 A presentation of the winning essay: Ms. Faizah Atu Mohammad, Overall Winner of the Youth Leadership Competition
21:45 – 22:00PM	AWARD CEREMONY FOR ALF 2023 SPONSORS H.E. Dr. Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete, ALF Patron and Former President of the United Republic of Tanzania
22:00PM	DEPARTURE

Day 2 | Friday 26 May, 2023

9:00 - 10:00AM	ARRIVAL, REGISTRATION AND TEA
10:00 – 12:30PM	SESSION III Mobilising African stakeholders to ensure a successful implementation of the AfCFTA <i>Presenter</i> Mr. Prudence Sebahizi, Director, Institutional Matters and Programmes Coordination, AfCFTA Secretariat <i>Panelists</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Hon. Kobina Tahiru Hammond, Minister of Trade and Industry, GhanaMr. Abdulmajid Nsekela, Group CEO and Managing Director, CRDB Bank Plc <i>Moderator</i> Dr. Julie Gichuru, Head of Public Affairs and Communications, Mastercard Foundation
	STATEMENT OF THE FORUM Dr. Emmanuel Maliti, Economist, iReview Ltd.
	CLOSING REMARKS H.E. Hailemariam Desalegn Boshe, Former Prime Minister of the Federal Republic of Ethiopia
12:30 – 12:45PM	
12:45 – 13:00PM	
13:00PM	LUNCH
16:00 – 17:00PM	TREE-PLANTING EVENT Kofi Annan International Peace Training Centre - Peace Garden <i>All Leaders</i>



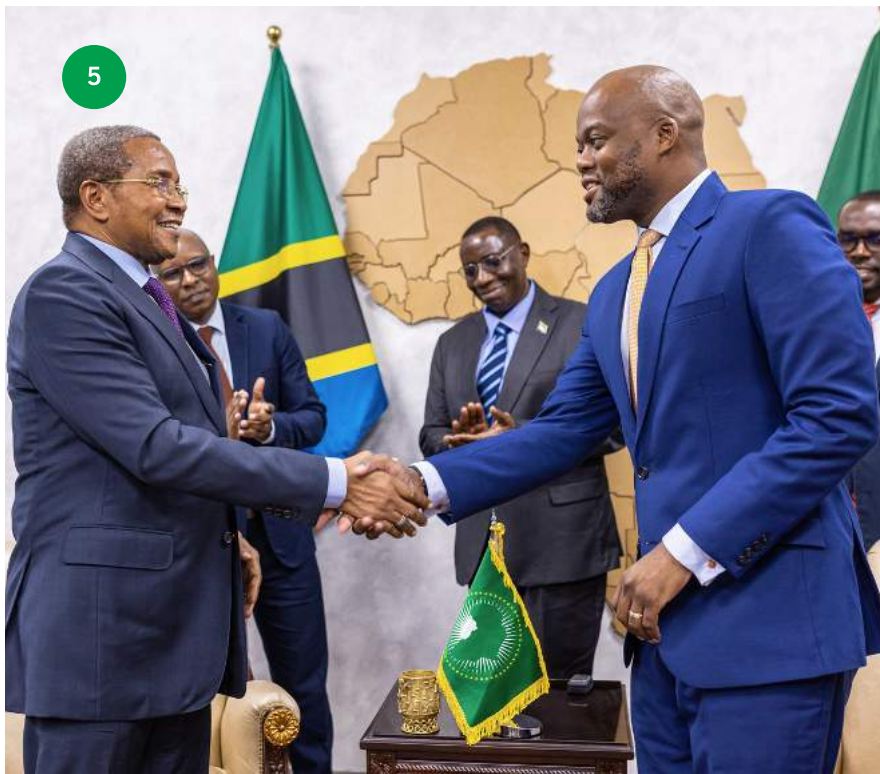
1 A group photo following the award ceremony for winners of the Youth Leadership Competition 2023, organised as part of the ALF. From L-R: H.E. Mene, H.E. Marzouki, H.E. Jonathan, Ms. Sithandweyinkosi Sivela (Second runner-up), H.E. Obasanjo, Ms. Faizah Atu Muhammad (Overall winner), H.E. Akufo-Addo, H.E. Kikwete, Mr. Nixon Manda (Fourth runner-up), H.E. Koroma, Mr. Innocent Matekere (First runner-up), H.E. Yayi, and Mr. Onwuka Dabeluchukwu Chiemelie (Third runner-up).



2 Ms. Faizah Atu Muhammad (Nigeria), Overall winner of the Youth Leadership Competition 2023 presents her essay.



4 President Akufo-Addo (Left) share a light moment with H.E. Kikwete (Middle) and H.E. Koroma (Right) just before the start of ALF 2023.



5 The two convenors: H.E. Kikwete (Left) and H.E. Mene (Right) meet the day before ALF 2023 to discuss the key issues concerning the forum.

THANK YOU TO ALL OUR PARTNERS



