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# AFCFTA

#1/NOVEMBER 2022

NEWS MAGAZINE

**WAMKELE MENE**

**“TAKE UP THE  
OPPORTUNITIES  
OFFERED  
BY AFCFTA”**

The secretary-general of the AfCFTA secretariat appeals to African private operators to seize the opportunities offered by the AfCFTA.



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# TIME FOR AFRICA!

## EDITORIAL

Many Western companies, sensing the opportunities of the AfCFTA, are accelerating the process of setting up their branch in Africa. Or expand their activities in Africa. To produce in Africa and sell to Africans. They are certainly welcome. But Africans should not leave the field open only to these giants.

It is time for Africans to invest in Africa and take advantage of the many opportunities that our continent offers. Briggette Harrington is one of those who have taken the ball and run with it.

The name of this brave lady is now inscribed in the annals of intra-African trade. The CEO of Igire Coffee Limited exported the first batch of her coffee from Rwanda to Accra, Ghana, in October 2022, marking the official start of preferential trade under the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). His company is the first to receive an AfCFTA certificate of origin from the Rwandan authorities.

Like Briggette Harrington, entrepreneurs from eight African countries can now export their products and services to Africa at preferential rates. Read her secrets in this issue. Let's all do the same. Let's explore new opportunities and not leave Africa's assets only in the hands of others! Let's invest in Africa!

AfCFTA's Guided Trade Initiative (GTI) was launched in Accra, Ghana on October 7, 2022. It brings together eight countries, namely Cameroon, Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, Mauritius, Rwanda, Tanzania and Tunisia, representing the five regions of Africa.

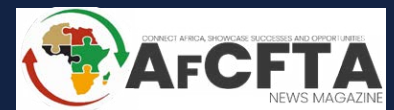
The objective is to enable meaningful trade and to test the operational, institutional, legal and trade policy environment under the AfCFTA.

Under the AfCFTA, tariffs on 90 percent of liberalized goods will be reduced by 2030 and 7 percent by 2035. Countries are allowed to tax 3 per cent of goods produced.

According to Wamkele Mene, secretary general of the AfCFTA Secretariat, products slated for trade under the initiative include ceramic tiles, accumulators, tea, coffee, processed meat products, maize starch, sugar, pasta, glucose syrup, dried fruits and sisal fiber, among others. This is in line with AfCFTA's focus on value chain development.

The AfCFTA, which came into effect on January 1, 2021, has created the world's largest free trade area by number of participating countries. It consolidates a market of about 1.3 billion people in 55 AU member countries with a combined GDP of \$3.4 billion. In addition, it could potentially lift 50 million Africans out of poverty and increase the continent's income by \$470 billion. So let's do it! Let's think Africa and invest in Africa!

By **Beaugas Orain DJOYUM**



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**AFCFTA NEWS MAGAZINE**

**EDITOR:  
BEAUGAS ORAIN DJOYUM**

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# WAMKELE MENE: “TAKE UP THE OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED BY AFCFTA”

## THE SECRETARY-GENERAL, AFCFTA SECRETARIAT, APPEALS TO AFRICAN PRIVATE OPERATORS TO SEIZE THE OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED BY THE AFCFTA. EXCERPTS FROM HIS MESSAGE.

As you may well know, since the establishment of the AfCFTA in March 2018, several significant milestones have been achieved. Progress in ratifications and negotiations has been fast.

Currently, 54 countries are signatories to the Agreement Establishing the AfCFTA, implying only one country remains outstanding. In addition, we now have 44 countries that have ratified and deposited their instruments of ratification, making them State Parties.

Phase I of the AfCFTA negotiations, covering trade in goods, trade in services and dispute settlement mechanism, are almost concluded. There, however, remain some few outstanding items bordering on the rules of origin, schedules of tariff concessions and specific commitments yet to be finalized. I will return to this point later.

Phase 2 negotiations on Competition Policy, Investment and Intellectual Property Rights are on the verge of conclusion, while the Protocols on Digital trade and Women and Youth in Trade are at design stage.

### TIME TO BRING ON BOARD MORE ACTIVELY

As you may recall, given the significant progress achieved in the Phase 1 negotiations, the Assembly of African Union Heads of State and Government on 5th December, 2020 authorised the start of trading in goods using the AfCFTA preferences from 1st January, 2021.

January 2021, therefore, marked the beginning of a monumental milestone in Africa's integration history, as the continent opened its markets under the Continental Free Trade Area.

With the implementation of the Phase 1 Protocol on trade in Goods flagged off, it is now possible to trade in 'Made in Africa' goods across the continent or between RECs.

Despite these significant achievements, we still have a long way to go and this is not the time to take our feet off the gas pedal.

In fact, now – at the implementation stage - is the time to bring on board more actively, the private sector operatives, supporting state-actors, and all the other stakeholders which are key to ensuring the success of the AfCFTA.

As it has been emphasized over time, no matter how well grounded the AfCFTA objectives are, they will remain elusive if our businesses, the micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), are unable to take full advantage of the opportunities offered by the AfCFTA, to trade and invest.

It is, therefore, imperative that the private sector is actively engaged for the effective implementation of the AfCFTA at all levels; national, regional and continental. It is in this context that I find this forum relevant and timely. Distinguished Guests

### AN INCLUSIVE PRIVATE SECTOR ENGAGEMENT PLAN

To achieve the aspiration of the AfCFTA and ensure that gains in economic growth are inclusive – of women, youth, and MSMEs – and ultimately sustainable, there is need for real action on the ground. And in recognition of the pivotal role of the private sector to deliver on the promises of the AfCFTA, the Secretariat, in



collaboration with our partners, has launched an inclusive Private Sector Engagement Plan, based on four initial priority value chains – agro-processing, automotives, pharmaceuticals, and transport and logistics.

These value chains were prioritised based on the relatively high level of import substitution today – an indicator of existing demand in local markets, and some level of existing exports – an indicator of the ability to produce these goods locally. Sectors identified for future waves include horticulture, textiles, financial services, telecommunications, and IT.

These initial priority value chains are the quick wins that we are prioritising for the implementation of the AfCFTA to be successful and reduce Africa's over-dependence on imports and stimulate intra-Africa trade and investments.

### **US\$1 BILLION HAS BEEN MOBILISED BY AFREXIMBANK**

With this, businesses and investors, both domestic and foreign, are in a better place to make sound decisions on where to invest to



## THE TRUTH IS...

seize the AfCFTA opportunities. Already, an amount of US\$1 billion has been mobilised by the Afreximbank for the development of the automotive value chain and to support industrialisation in the continent.

Ultimately, we may have to craft a continental industrialisation strategy, to be embraced by national authorities, to facilitate the attainment of the AfCFTA industrialisation and sustainability objectives.

### THE GUIDED TRADE INITIATIVE

(...) I am pleased to say that as we speak, intense preparations are underway for the start of commercially meaningful trading under the Guided Trade Initiative. Eight State Parties, namely, Cameroon, Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, Mauritius, Tanzania, and Tunisia, that have met the minimum requirements and deployed the AfCFTA E-Tariff Book and the Rules of Origin Manual, are set to pilot the initiative, from this Friday, 7th October.

The products earmarked to trade under the AfCFTA Guided Trade Initiative include ceramic tiles; batteries, tea, coffee, processed meat products, corn starch, sugar, pasta, glucose syrup, dried fruits, and sisal fiber, among others, in line with the AfCFTA focus on value chain development.

### WE NEED TO WORK IN CONCERT

It is my strong conviction that more State Parties will soon join the initiative to ensure commercially meaningful trading takes place across the entire continent.

(...) I urge all stakeholders, governments, public officials, private sector, business communities, and civil society, to continue to work together, to support the effective implementation of the AfCFTA. It is not enough for us each to play our part. We need to work in concert, sharing expertise and capabilities, among others.

And I challenge you all in the private sector, to take up the opportunities offered by AfCFTA and make it a success."

Excerpts of speaking notes for His Excellency WAMKELE MENE secretary-general, AfCFTA secretariat at Serena Kampala Hotel, Uganda 6 October 2022.



# NIAMEY, NIGER : AFRICA INDUSTRIALISATION WEEK

**AFRICA IS ONE OF THE MOST RAPIDLY INDUSTRIALIZING REGIONS IN THE WORLD. DESPITE THIS PROGRESS, MUCH WORK STILL NEEDS TO BE DONE TO INCLUDE ALL AFRICANS IN THE BENEFITS OF INDUSTRIALISATION.**



## Information sharing and sensitisation seminar on the AfCFTA

on the sidelines of the African Union  
Extraordinary Assembly on Industrialisation,  
Economic Diversification and AfCFTA

Date: **Thursday, 24 November 2022**

Venue: **Palais Des Congrès (Salle Huit Clos)  
Niamey - Niger**

Time: **9:30 - 13:00**

**#AfricaIndustrialisation**

The AU Africa Industrialisation Week which will be held in Niamey, Niger from the 18th to the 26th of November under the theme “Industrialising Africa: Renewed commitment towards an Inclusive and Sustainable Industrialisation and Economic Diversification” is a chance for leaders, policymakers, and businesses to join together and discuss ways to spur industrial growth in the continent.

This is an important event for the continent of Africa. The summit aims to highlight Africa’s renewed political determination and commitment to industrialisation, which is seen as a key pillar in achieving the continent’s economic growth and development goals.

African Union



**AIW**  
AFRICA  
INDUSTRIALIZATION  
WEEK

**Industrialising Africa: Renewed  
commitment towards an  
Inclusive and Sustainable  
Industrialization and  
Economic Diversification**

**20 - 25 November 2022  
Niamey, Niger**

**#AfricaIndustrialization**

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# THE SECRETS OF BRIGGETTE HARRINGTON, THE FIRST BENEFICIARY OF AFCFTA'S OPPORTUNITIES

**RWANDA HAS BEGUN TRADING UNDER THE AFRICAN CONTINENTAL FREE TRADE AREA IN A PILOT PHASE THAT AIMS TO TEST THE ENVIRONMENTAL, LEGAL AND TRADE POLICY FOUNDATIONS OF INTRA-AFRICAN TRADE. THIS WAS IN EARLY OCTOBER 2022.**



The zone includes seven other African countries: Cameroon, Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, Mauritius, Tanzania and Tunisia.

The first batch of coffee from Igire Coffee Limited exported to Accra, Ghana, marked the official start of preferential trade under AfCFTA.

New Times' Alice Kagina had an exclusive interview with Brigitte Harrington, President and CEO of Igire Coffee Limited, on what this development means for the companies as well as what can be done to get more Rwanda-made products ready for the mainland market.

## HERE ARE SOME EXCERPTS.

### Share a brief background on what your company does

Igire Coffee Limited is committed to uplifting –by way of financial resources –the women that grow coffee whom we work with. They are part of Hingakawa women's coffee association and we have an annual agreement of purchasing so much of their coffee.

In essence, we purchase coffee



from them, roast it, sometimes grind it, package it and send it to the export market.

Up until recently, exporting it has looked like 'putting it into suitcases' and taking it to Ghana, Nigeria, and the US, looking for a market. So, being under the AfCFTA is our first opportunity to actually bring coffee into a country through defined processes.

### **What are the different steps you followed to export your first batch under AfCFTA?**

I have a degree in International Business and I have been trading internationally for about 25 years now. This has helped me a lot and I am glad to walk you through the steps.

After receiving the coffee from the women's cooperative, we have it processed and packaged in Kigali. The coffee is then sent to the National Agricultural Export Development Board (NAEB) to have it labeled according to international standards.

While we get in contact with the freight forwarder regarding the shipment, we simultaneously have to obtain a certificate of origin and another one of quality with an application done online. And payments are also done.

In addition to that, we have to get the phytosanitary certificate. Now, once we have those three documents, they are sent to Rwanda customs to receive a certificate of origin under the AfCFTA. Without it, there is no basis for reduction of duty in whatever country it is going to.

After that, the shipment has to go through the airport standard procedure for it to be flown to the desired destination and there is a new negotiated rate for air freight for







products leaving Rwanda under the AfCFTA, which is \$1.40/Kg with a minimum of 102Kg of the product.

**What should be done to have local products ready to be traded across different borders?**

In order for us to be able to compete is to know everything there is to know about the product, our target market, international labeling laws and what it means if your product violates those laws.

Our biggest problem is packaging, not only in Rwanda but in Sub-Saharan Africa in general. The quality of products is there but we don't necessarily have the packaging and the know-how to be able to figure out what we need to do logistically.

What can happen, is being charged to re-

export the product to where it came from or destroy it at their expense, for something simple as not putting the size or quantity on the label.

**Going forward, what are your next steps in trading under the AfCFTA?**

My primary focus is to get the products to consumers. It's great to export and import products but until they are on the shelves in supermarkets selling, you have no business.

My aim here is to get the products selling and have additional orders so we can sustain this trade we have started.

I will also be doing coffee testing in Ghana during different events.

By Alice Kagina, New Times. akagina@newtimesrwanda.com

A portrait of Professor Benedict O. Oramah, a middle-aged Black man with a shaved head, wearing a dark suit, white shirt, and a red tie with small dark spots. He is smiling slightly and looking towards the camera. The background is a light, textured wall. On the left side of the image, there is a vertical teal bar with yellow diagonal stripes.

## Professor Benedict O. Oramah

President and Chairman  
of the Board of Directors

The African Export-Import Bank

Cairo, Egypt  
June 2022

“

The AfCFTA  
could emerge as  
a major growth  
springboard for  
Africa’s creative  
industries.

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Transforming Africa's Trade

African Export-Import Bank  
Banque Africaine d'Import-Export

# African Trade Report 2022

Leveraging the  
Power of Culture and  
Creative Industries for  
Accelerated Structural  
Transformation in the  
AfCFTA Era

