

FACILITATING AFRICA'S TRADE

Africa's leaders pledge to work harder to facilitate trade

Kigali, 20 May 2014

Leaders on trade development from across the continent are meeting in Kigali on 20 May during the 2014 African Development Bank Annual meetings, hosted by the Bank's NEPAD, Regional Integration and Trade Department.

The high-level panel will tackle the hard issues behind why African countries are finding it difficult to expand trade and connect to regional and global value chains. The session will come up with solutions to mobilize support and make inroads to improve trade performance and competitiveness on: the post-Bali agenda, enterprise and exports, integration, services, finance and trade corridors.

The continent's leaders will address global and regional trends, track progress and identify opportunities, pledging to work harder to facilitate Africa's trade. The event will look at starting to build a roadmap that supports regional integration and trade to position Africa as the world's next global emerging market.

Yonov Frederick Agah, Deputy Director-General, World Trade Organization notes: *"The WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement offers new traction to Africa's efforts to boost trade with itself and the rest of the world. Through its growing soft and hard infrastructure support, the AfDB is a crucial development partner to achieve the goal of expanding Africa's trade."*

Aranca González, Executive Director, International Trade Center comments: *"Effective trade facilitation requires hard infrastructure and a transparent regulatory framework. The AfDB is the natural partner in Africa to assist countries in prioritizing and financing interventions to make trading easier and less costly. The AfDB and ITC are partners in ensuring trade facilitation support SME competitiveness."*

Amb. Richard Sezibera, Secretary General, East African Community remarks: *"Facilitating Africa's trade takes leadership, confidence and a deepening of regional integration. The RECS, like the EAC, are the building blocks of integration to turn the Continental Free Trade Area into reality. The AfDB's facilitating Africa's trade window is critical. This is Africa's moment to turn trade into incomes for Africans."*

Hon. François Kanimba, Minister of Trade and Industry, Rwanda notes: *"Rwanda is a landlocked country at the centre of Africa. Growth of the services sectors in Rwanda has been one of the main drivers of the rapid growth of the economy and our vision in the country's 2020 agenda. We still have structural problems that limit our potential and we urgently need to develop a tendency to trade among ourselves."*

Jean-Louis Ekra, President, African Export-Import Bank comments: *"Our increasing support to trade finance intermediaries (African commercial banks and direct borrowers), reflects our commitment to increase intra-African and South-South trade, expand value-added and service exports and improve access to trade"*



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finance. The AfDB is a strategic partner, bringing a wealth of experience in African trade."

Johny Smith, Chief Executive Officer, Walvis Bay Corridor Group remarks: "Facilitating trade is about what are we going to put in place to move to the next generation. Our business model has reduced the cost of doing business for consumers across Southern Africa. The AfDB has a very important role to bring people together in dialogue. We have to create a bridge to the formal market to have growth and prosperity."

Moono Mupotola, Division Manager, Regional Integration and Trade, AfDB notes: "Regional integration and trade matters for Africa's future prosperity like never before. The Africa Trade Fund is the Bank's number one facility on trade-related technical assistance. To meet the continent's needs we are working closely with our partners, responding to demands from trade facilitation to global value chains."

Notes to editors:

Reference should be made to the event agenda 'Facilitating Africa's Trade'

The Regional Integration and Trade Division, under the NEPAD, Regional Integration and Trade Department, is managing a growing portfolio. Activities include leading on developing knowledge products, delivering demand-driven programs and working with strategic partners to respond to global and regional trends from trade facilitation to global value chains.

The Africa Trade Fund (AfTra) is the Bank's number one facility on technical assistance on trade. AfTra's first pillar focuses on supporting trade facilitation continent-wide. AfTra is: impact-centered and results-focused; building a true African partnership at the local, regional and global level, and moving ahead on targeted and transformative delivery.

Further information, visit www.afdb.org and www.africatradefund.org and contact:

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