



Independent Continental Youth
Advisory Council On AfCFTA

AfCFTA YOUTH ENGAGEMENT REPORT 2022



January 2023

ICOYACA

icoyaca@youlead.africa

“An Africa Whose Development is people driven, relying on the potential offered by African People, especially its Women and Youth...”

Aspiration 6 - African Union Agenda 2063

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Communication from the ICOYACA Chairperson



Dear AfCFTA Youth Champions,

Greetings and congratulations.

The year 2022 has undoubtedly been a milestone year for [AfCFTA Youth Advisory Council](#) and as we start 2023, a year the African Union has dedicated to the AfCFTA implementation, it is important to revisit the efforts of last year.

In the last year, our first year of operation, we were able to ensure that over 20,000 African Women and Youth in Trade were capacitated with the AfCFTA knowledge through our AfCFTA Youth Engagement Strategy that included a good number of activities namely; AfCFTA Bootcamps, AfCFTA Youth Engage Series, AfCFTA Youth Day, AFRO-EURO Trade Facilitation Exchange Forum, Regional AfCFTA Engagements, Protocol of Women and Youth in Trade Consultations among others.

This milestone was achieved because of the important contributions of time, experience and talent given by our AfCFTA Champions. Your work as leaders, educators, and advocates is what made it possible for us to ensure youth inclusion in the AfCFTA implementation processes is institutionalized. You brought knowledge, a spirit of service, commitment to the ideals of youth inclusion, and volunteer leadership skills to our work. Thank you for these special contributions.

By mobilizing youth and women, strategically educating and empowering them to participate and take advantage of the AfCFTA opportunities, you sowed a seed that will grow to support the African Union's efforts of turning the continent's youthful population into a demographic dividend. These efforts in a long run will increase youth participation in intra-African trade in turn, lead to increased savings and higher productivity in Africa's youthful population hence breaking intergenerational poverty, economic inequalities, and ensuring a stable, peaceful and prosperous Africa, as envisaged by Agenda 2063 of the African Union is achieved.

Important to note is that the milestone was also achieved because of the full support rendered to the council by the AfCFTA Secretariat whose participation in the council's

activities and whose involvement of the council in secretariat engagements made a lot of difference and went a long way to solidify the council among the youth and development partners. This we give thanks to H.E Wamkele Mene, Secretary General, Mr. Prudence Sebahizi and the Secretariat Team for the support.

We also want to that our able development partners whose support ensured that we delivered most of our engagements. Your technical and financial support is what made 2022 a milestone for the council. Thank you [International Trade Centre](#), [UNDP](#) Africa Regional Beaural and [United Nations Economic Commission for Africa](#) (UNECA) among others. These organisations worked closely with us as equal partners which enabled us deliver on our mandate. Your support is a true testament that if we the youth are given the opportunity and supported to lead, we can indeed take charge of our own development.

As we start the third year of trading under the AfCFTA, our target is to ensure that in the next three years, we capacitate over One Million women and youth in trade, equipping them with ready-to-trade knowledge with goal to increase youth participation in intra-African Trade.

The journey will be tough but with persistence and resilience, we will managed to deliver on our mandate. We have no doubt that continuing to work together with our champions, the AfCFTA Secretariat and Development partners, we shall make the AfCFTA promises a reality to African Youth as we contribute to this year's African Union theme that prioritizes the [#AfCFTA](#) implementation.

We will also continue implementing our AfCFTA Youth Engagement Strategy as a means of creating youth ownership and most importantly enabling they take advantage of the intra-African trade opportunities.

Thank you so much for your support in 2022 and we look forward to continue working with you in 2023 and beyond.

Sincerely,



Emolot Allan David

Chairperson

1.0. Introduction

The [Independent Continental Youth Advisory Council on AfCFTA \(ICOYACA\)](#) is a youth-led body initiated by young people from the continent of Africa, under the guidance and stewardship of [YouLead Africa](#), [MSTCDC](#) and the [GIZ African Union Office](#). The Council was launched on the 9th of November 2021 in the presence of **H.E Jakaya Kikwete, Former President of the Republic of Tanzania** who doubles as YouLead's Patron.

It was officially unveiled after structuring on April 29th 2022 by [H.E. Wamkele Mene - Secretary General, AfCFTA Secretariat](#) represented by Mr. Sebahizi Prudence - Chief Technical Officer, AfCFTA Secretariat and details can be found [here](#). The Council has established over 54 [Country Chapters](#) and engages 10 youth in each member state. Important to note is that the Council **works closely with the AfCFTA Secretariat** to Champion youth inclusion and was created following a recommendation from an AfCFTA Youth inclusion study that showed a lack of structures to meaningfully engage youth in the AfCFTA-related processes, a copy of the report is [here](#).

1.1. Why ICOYACA?

The Independent Continental Youth Advisory Council on AfCFTA (ICOYACA) was mainly established because of the following reasons: Engage youth and their enterprises, Support the AfCFTA implementation, Trade Data Availability, Coordination and Mainstreaming AfCFTA youth engagements and Partnership leveraging.

1.1.0. Engage youth and their enterprises

ICOYACA Country Chapters ensure proper bottom-up mobilization and strong youth engagement at each member state.

1.1.1. Support the AfCFTA implementation

ICOYACA helps to mobilize resources to foster youth inclusion, whilst also advocating for the alignment of national-level plans to suit AfCFTA implementation.

1.1.2. Trade Data Availability

Our 550 members will ensure quality data collection which will make the development of learning systems and trade facilitation websites easy.

1.1.3. Coordination and Mainstreaming AfCFTA youth engagements

Country Chapters prevent misalignment of AfCFTA youth programs hence enabling at-scale participation of youth in intra-Africa trade.

1.1.4. Partnership leveraging

Our Chapters are the only youth bodies with a strong foundation and a system to harmonize the partners' competing overlapping framework and initiatives.

2.0. Activities under the AfCFTA Youth Engagement Strategy

2.1. AfCFTA Youth Day – (09th November, Hybrid Event, Kampala, Uganda)

The Council in partnership with the Secretariat of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), supported by the International Trade Centre (ITC) and the government of Uganda, organised the first-ever “AfCFTA Youth Day” on 09th November 2022 in Kampala, Uganda, details can be found [here](#). The commemorated was a day used to urge Africa's youth to pursue business opportunities through cross-continental trade made possible by the AfCFTA Agreement.

Established in 2018, the AfCFTA has a combined output of \$1,7 trillion, and its estimated transformative potential will rely on the ability to tap into the skills of the continent's youth. The discussions centered around the implementation status of the Free Trade Area, its implications on Africa's youth in business, and what young entrepreneurs could expect from initiatives such as the AfCFTA Women and Youth Protocol.

Themed “Young People as Stimulants for a Sustainable Prosperous Continent Through Trade and Industrialization”, the one-day event was hosted by Uganda's Minister of State for Youth and Children Affairs, Hon. Nyirabashitsi Sarah Mateke; ITC Executive Director, Pamela Coke-Hamilton; Cabo Verde Secretary of the State for Digital Economy, Hon. Pedro Lopes; the East African Business Council Executive Director, John Bosco Kalisa; and the Secretary-General of the AfCFTA Secretariat H.E. Mene Wamkele represented by Prudence Sebahizi, Chief Technical Advisor on the AfCFTA.



Independent Continental Youth
Advisory Council On AfCFTA



AfCFTA Youth Day 2022

YOUNG PEOPLE AS STIMULANTS FOR A SUSTAINABLE & PROSPEROUS CONTINENT
THROUGH TRADE & INDUSTRIALIZATION

YouLead Summit 2022 Launch

DIGITAL ACCESS & FUTURE OF WORK

9TH
NOVEMBER

11 AM EAT
10 AM CAT

KAMPALA SERENA HOTEL
KATONGA HALL



SAC
Youth Ambassadors
Platform

Prudence Sebahizi, Chief Technical Advisor at the AfCFTA Secretariat emphasized at the event: “Young people must scrutinize their opportunities and see what is in it for them in their respective areas of business.”



Hon. Nyirabashitsi Sarah Mateke, Uganda’s Minister of State for Youth and Children Affairs said: “The AfCFTA focuses on addressing the challenges that have hindered youth participation in intra-African trade. It offers Africa the opportunity to confront significant trade and economic challenges.”



Draft ICOYACA AfCFTA

2022

Chairperson of ICOYACA Emolot Allan David added during the launch: “African youth are the drivers of Africa’s economic integration; and the AfCFTA Youth Day is positioning them to take charge of their own development by championing the implementation of the AfCFTA.”



Key recommendations outlining five key action areas identified by youth entrepreneurs will be submitted for consideration at the African Industrialization Week on the margins of the 35th Summit of Heads of State and Government of the African Union from 20-26 November in Niamey, Niger.



Therefore, the AfCFTA Youth Day is the one day annual event organised during the Africa Youth Month when we get to commemorate the establishment and operationalization of the AfCFTA since its grand signing in Kigali Rwanda, in 2018. The event also commemorates the unique formation of the Independent Continental Youth Advisory Council on AfCFTA (ICOYACA), launched by H.E Jakaya Kikwete former president of Tanzania and Hon. Dr. Peter Mathuki, East African Community Secretary General on the 09th November 2021 during the Youlead Africa Summit and later the unveiling by **H.E Wamkele Mene**, the Secretary General of the AfCFTA Secretariat on April 29th 2022.

AfCFTA Youth Day Engagement Analytics

YouTube	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 30 people streaming live ● 100 views in one day
Zoom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 2 041 registrants ● 1 015 total participants
Facebook	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 2 500 people reached
LinkedIn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 975 searches ● 696 reactions ● 23 838 impressions
Twitter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 42 300 impressions ● 69 tweets ● 270 new followers
Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● BBC Interview

2.2. The AfCFTA Youth Engage Series - (Monthly)

The AfCFTA Youth Engage Series was one of our successfully implemented and most impactful project. This is a One and Half our webinar that brings together the trade experts and youth on the same platform to discuss topical issues around the AfCFTA with a major focus of sharing knowledge of how youth can benefit from the AfCFTA opportunities.

The platform was also used by the youth to ask the expert pertinent issues around their inclusion in the AfCFTA implementation processes and because of this, most of our country champions have been included in the National AfCFTA Implementation Committees of their countries.

We organized Continental Series, Regional Economic Block Profiling and Member State AfCFTA implementation Profiling. These profiling aimed at: 1). Assessing the implementation of the AfCFTA at the Continental level with a specific focus on youth inclusion, REC level and Country Level focusing on the status of the AfCFTA implementation. 2). Discuss trade governance issues that directly affect the youth. The aim of these series is to ensure we have meaningful discussions and develop concrete solutions on how to have youth advance intra-African trade. Some of the held series are below for review:

- [How the AfCFTA will benefit the women in informal cross-border trade, the SMEs and Service Sector.](#)
- [Assessing the Status of implementation of the AfCFTA & Youth Inclusion in Eswatini and SADC](#)
- [What are the Pros and Cons of Free Trade Agreements: How effective are they?](#)
- [How the AfCFTA will benefit young Africans in Trade.](#)

 Independent Continental Youth Advisory Council On AfCFTA Togo Chapter

SÉRIE D'ENGAGEMENT DES JEUNES DE ZLECAF EP. 02
Comment bâtir des chaînes d'approvisionnement résilientes dans le cadre de la ZLECAF dans un contexte de crises mondiales?

Profilage de l'Afrique de l'Ouest

Modérateur

Moise PITASSA
Champion National Togo du ICOYACA et Président de REPAAFRIQUE coordinateur de la plateforme Forum Zlecaf Togo

Intervenants


Robine Okello
Analyste de la politique industrielle et de la chaîne de valeur agricole Division de l'Industrie de l'Innovation et des mines dans le Département ETIM Commission de l'Union africaine


AGNALA-ALAGAN Akpen
Chef Service Relations Commerciales au Port Autonome de Lomé


Mohamadou Iamine SANO
Directeur de formation au Cabinet RCL Enseignant Chercheur au CREA-FASEG


Eric Francis YOUNDA
Expert des opérations portuaires et logistiques Guichet Unique du Commerce Extérieur de Guinée


Samedi, 2 Juillet 4PM WAT Zoom - <https://bit.ly/3OwGJTN>


Initiative conjointe          @ICOYACA


 Independent Continental Youth Advisory Council On AfCFTA


AfCFTA YOUTH ENGAGE SERIES EP. 03
How the AfCFTA Youth Inclusion Report will inform the Negotiations of the AfCFTA Protocol on Women and Youth in Trade

Speakers


Rotimi Olawale
Executive Director YouthHub Africa


Tamarah Moutotekema Boussamba
CEO AGRIDIS


Tshepo Magoma
Head of Business, Innovation & Entrepreneurship SAYoF

Modérateur

Phelisters Wegesa
Head of AfCFTA Youth Engage Series ICOYACA

 Independent Continental Youth Advisory Council On AfCFTA

AfCFTA YOUTH ENGAGE SERIES EP. 04
What are the Pros and Cons of Free Trade Agreements: How effective are they?

Speakers


Dr. Halima Noor Abdi
Senior Trade Expert AfCFTA Secretariat, African Union


Dr. Ismael Tharwat
Economist - Business Cluster AU-EU Youth Cooperation Hub


Modesta Nsowah-Adu
Lawyer, Postgraduate student - World Trade Institute, Uni of Bern


Tanatsiwa Dambuza
Country Champion ICOYACA Zimbabwe

Modérateur

Phelisters Wegesa
Head of AfCFTA Youth Engage Series ICOYACA

WEDNESDAY, 1 JUNE, 7PM EAT - ZOOM <https://bit.ly/AfCFTAEngage04>

Joint Initiative of          @ICOYACA

 Independent Continental Youth Advisory Council On AfCFTA

AfCFTA YOUTH ENGAGE SERIES
EP 02 - How the AfCFTA will benefit the Women in informal Cross-border trade, the SME's and Services Sector

Speakers


MIE VEDEL-JORGENSEN
Associate expert in economic affairs African Trade Policy Centre / United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA)


NADIA Y. BAKO
Innovation and Entrepreneurship Associate / Women Gender and Youth Directorate African Union Commission


JOANITA NASUUNA
Program Associate: Women and Economic Justice / Southern and Eastern Africa Trade Integration and Negotiations Unit and SADC Trade Integration

Modérateur

Phelisters Wegesa
Head of AfCFTA Youth Engage Series ICOYACA

- [How the AfCFTA Youth Inclusion report will inform the negotiations of the AfCFTA Protocol on Women and Youth in Trade](#)
- [Assessing the Status of implementation of the AfCFTA & Youth Inclusion in Eswatini and SADC](#)
- [AfCFTA National Implementation Strategies: Will these quicken the AfCFTA Implementation and Spur Economic Growth in Africa.](#)
- [Youth and the AfCFTA](#)

INDEPENDENT CONTINENTAL YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL ON AfCFTA
(ICOYACA NIGERIA-CHAPTER)

AfCFTA YOUTH ENGAGE SERIES - WEST AFRICA PROFILING

THE AfCFTA

What it is? How can the youth take advantage of it? And what is the implementation progress of Nigeria?

Guest Speaker	Moderator	Panelists
 OLUSEGUN OLUTAYO Senior Trade Policy/Law Expert and Lead, Trade Enablement National Action Committee on AfCFTA Secretariat Nigeria	 ODIBELU PAMELA Deputy Country Champion ICOYACA NIGERIA	 OSHINOWO TIMILEHIN Country Champion ICOYACA NIGERIA
 AKINJISE DANIEL West Africa Regional Coordinator ICOYACA	 ENITAN OKEDIJI International Development Professional / Member ICOYACA NIGERIA	 BRIGHT KEKELI AMUZU Country Champion ICOYACA GHANA

SATURDAY 19.03.22 | 6PM WAT | ZOOM
 JOIN AT bit.ly/3tRVvxx

[IcoyacaNigeria](https://www.instagram.com/IcoyacaNigeria)

AfCFTA YOUTH ENGAGE SERIES
 EP 01 - YOUTH AND THE AfCFTA

23.02.22 | 7PM EAST | ZOOM
 REGISTER AT bit.ly/AfCFTAEngage01

Host:
 Edith Njogu
 Vice Chair-ICOYACA
 CEO Ariella for Africa

GUEST SPEAKERS		REGIONAL SPEAKERS	
 Mrs. Yvett Masudira Executive Director PABWA	 Adam Aqib Editor of African Newpage	 Dr. Dario Canal ICOYACA Country Champion, Mozambique Rep. Southern Africa	 Prof. Amma Alarob ICOYACA Deputy Country Champion, Egypt Rep. Northern Africa
 Mr. John Waligweni ICOYACA Country Champion, Uganda Executive Director - FOMU, Uganda Rep. East Africa	 Omer Ibrahim Abdallah ICOYACA Country Champion, Comoros, Rep. Island Countries / Youth in Diaspora	 Temilola Oyeleke ICOYACA Nigeria Member, Rep. West Africa	 Mr. Gregory Siva Assoumou F.A.C.T. Rep. Central Africa

YouLead ONE



Independent Continental Youth
Advisory Council On AfCFTA

AfCFTA Youth Engage Series

AfCFTA National Implementation Strategies: Will these quicken the AfCFTA implementation and spur inclusive economic growth in African States?

MODERATOR

Trudi Hartzberg
Executive Director
Trade Law Centre, Tralac

Jane Nalunga
Executive Director,
SEATINI UGANDA

Thembele Msibi
Head of Communications
ICOYACA

Jacquiline Pimer
Trade Policy Expert,
UNECA

Linda Chepkwony
Programmes and Capacity
Building Directorate,
ICOYACA

Wednesday, 17 August 22 <https://bit.ly/AfCFTAYouthEngageSeries>

Joint Initiative of

2.2.1. Twitter Spaces

We were also been able to organize a couple of twitter spaces lead by our different country chapters as seen below;

Independent Continental Youth
Advisory Council On AfCFTA
GHANA CHAPTER

**POSITIONING YOUTH IN GHANA TO BENEFIT FROM THE AfCFTA
AT COUNTRY AND CONTINENTAL LEVEL**

Host

Bright Amuzu
ICOYACA Ghana Country
Champion

Stephanie Asare
Accelerator Program
Manager - Start OA

Eweonam Jennifer
Entrepreneur

Norbert Kofi Dziwornu
Accelerator Program
Manager - Start OA

Confidence Mawusi
Youth Development
Activist

TWITTER SPACES
7 SEPTEMBER, 7PM WAT

@ICOYACA_Ghana

Independent Continental Youth
Advisory Council On AfCFTA
Nigeria Chapter

THEME

ZERO VISA AFRICA
Inaugural AfCFTA Youth Day Pre-Event

2.3. African-European (AFRO-EURO) Youth Trade and Economic Integration Experience Exchange Forum – (28th September 2022).

On 17-18 February 2022, during the 6th European Union - African Union Summit, the Heads of State and Government met under the Co-Chairpersonship of H.E. Mr. Charles Michel, President of the European Council and H.E. Mr. Macky Sall, President of the Republic of Senegal and Chairperson of the African Union and agreed that the aim of the Joint Vision 2030 is to consolidate a renewed Partnership for solidarity, security, peace and sustainable and sustained economic development and prosperity for citizens of the African Union (AU) and the European Union (EU) and for the future generations, bringing together her people, regions and organisations.

They noted that the existing trade agreements between the EU and some African countries have contributed to the strengthening and deepening of trade and economic development between the two continents. They therefore committed to boosting regional and continental economic integration, particularly through the African Continental Free Trade Area and work gradually towards the progressive and mutually beneficial integration of the respective continental markets.

It is against this backdrop that the *AFRO-EURO Youth Trade And Economic Integration Experience Exchange Forum* was initiated to put African and European Young professionals and entrepreneurs at centre-stage with National, Regional, and Continental leaders and Policymakers, to promote peer learning and youth leadership in trade, as well as advance practical solutions from African and European Economic Integration. The forum was used to discuss business opportunities and develop strategies to enable youth-led small businesses to export successfully from Africa to the EU and vice versa.

Grand Invitation to African & European Youth Business Leaders & Policy Makers

The Afro-Euro Youth Trade & Economic Integration Experience Exchange Forum

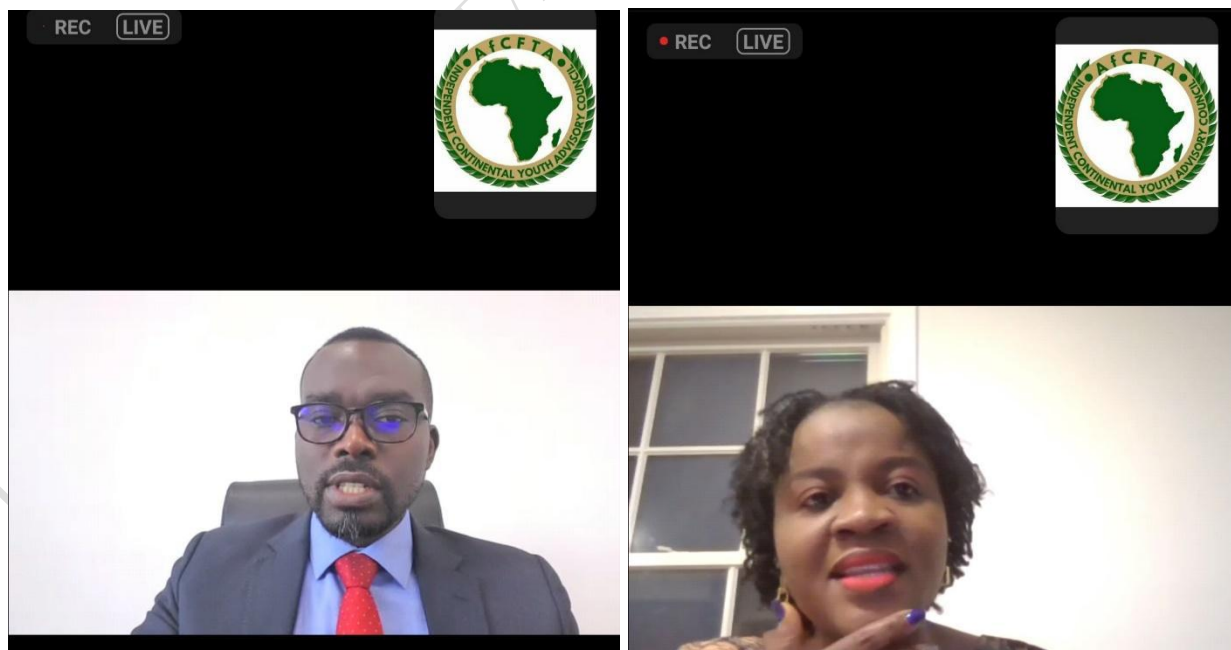
PRESENTED BY
The Independent Continental Youth Advisory Council on AfCFTA (ICOYACA)

IN COLLABORATION WITH
JEF Europe, the AU Diaspora Youth Initiative, the AU-EU YouthHub, the Pan African Youth Union, the African Youth Diaspora Organization & YouLead Africa Collaborating Entities

28.09.22 | 11 am EAT
bit.ly/AfroEuroForum | 10am CET 8am GMT | 10am CAT 9am WAT



Over 5,000 youth in trade both in Africa and Europe and trade experts engaged before, during and after the forum. The forum was attended by H.E Wamkele Mene, Secretary General AfCFTA Secretariat who was represented by Mr. Prudence Sebahizi, Chief Technical Officer who delivered a key note speech on behalf of the Secretary General. Ms. Joy Kategekwa delivered a speech on behalf of UNDP New York Office.



Other prominent organisation working on the AfCFTA implementation that joined us include; African Union Youth Division, European Union, United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), International Trade Centre (ITC), SADC Secretariat, East African Business Council, and COLEPA among other entities. The video recording of the forum can be accessed [here](#).

The forum was organised in collaboration with the European Young Federalists (JEF Europe), African Union Diaspora Youth Initiative, AU-EU Youth Cooperation Hub, Pan African Youth Union, and African Youth Diaspora Organisation. We were also supported by our Sub-mother entities; YouthHub Africa, Nile Youth Development Action, Southern Africa Youth Forum (SAYoF) and JACT.

3.0 AfCFTA Secretariat and Regional AfCFTA Events Participation

3.1. Protocol on Women and Youth in Trade Consultations, 20-21 June 2022

The Council was invited to participate in a brainstorming session organised by the AfCFTA Secretariat in Nairobi Kenya in June. The Brainstorming Sessions was a two-day closed-door, invitation-only event for experts, policy makers, regulators, and other relevant players in the areas of trade, and women and youth empowerment in Africa.

The focus was on the Chapter on Women in Trade of the Protocol and on the Youth in Trade Chapter. The Brainstorming Sessions focused on a number of issues including, inter alia:

- Taking stock of identified constraints women and youth face when trading across borders;
- Possible approach (es) and elements to consider in the development of the AfCFTA Protocol on Women and Youth in Trade that can help achieve tangible benefits for women and youth traders and fulfil the sustainable development objectives of AfCFTA State Parties and non-State Parties;

- Existing practices and frameworks designed to improve the capacity of women and youth to trade across borders on the continent included in the AfCFTA Agreement and other legal instruments; and
- The interaction between the question of women and youth in trade, trade in goods, trade in services, intellectual property rights, competition policy and investment, among others.

In the brainstorming session, our Chairperson shared propositions to be included in the Chapter on youth which focused on institutionalizing youth participation in the AfCFTA implementation processes at regional and national level.



Draft ICOYACA

Report 2022



Draft ICOYACA AfCFTA Youth Engagement Report 2022



3.2. AfCFTA Conference on Women and Youth in Trade, 12-14 September 2022.

The council participated in the AfCFTA Conference on Women and Youth in Trade which was organised by the AfCFTA Secretariat in conjunction with the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania on 12 - 14 September 2022, in Dar es Salaam, United Republic of Tanzania.

The Conference, held under the theme “Women and Youth; The Engine of AfCFTA Trade in Africa”, provided a platform for women in trade, policy makers, development partners, financiers, and other key stakeholders on the continent to discuss, in depth, perspectives on women and youth in trade. The overall objective was to develop policy proposals for the draft Protocol. The conference helped to design concrete solutions that enhanced the ability of women and youth to take advantage of opportunities offered by the AfCFTA.

The council working closely with Youlead Africa, United Nations Commission for Africa (UNECA) led the youth proposition harvesting session which was key at ensuring the conference met its objective of developing a draft on the youth chapter of the protocol.



In fulfilment of the objectives of the AfCFTA as embodied in Article 3 (e) of the Agreement establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA Agreement) and in line with its commitment to broaden inclusiveness in the operation of the AfCFTA, the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union (AU Assembly) decided to include the Protocol on Women and Youth in Trade within the scope of the AfCFTA Agreement. So the conference was organised to conduct consultations on the propositions to be included in the chapters of the women and youth in trade.





3.3. AfCFTA Stakeholder Engagement on the Sidelines of the 17th Extra-ordinary Assembly of the African Union (AU) Heads of State and Government, 20-25 November.

Our Chairperson was invited to participate in the awareness-raising and information-sharing seminar with the African business community on Industrialization, Economic Diversification and the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), organised by the Secretariat of the

African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) in collaboration with the International Trade Center (ITC).



International Trade Centre

AfCFTA

AfCFTA STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT ON THE SIDELINES OF THE 17TH EXTRAORDINARY ASSEMBLY OF THE AFRICAN UNION (AU) HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT

On behalf of the Secretariat of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) in collaboration with the International Trade Center (ITC), H.E. Wamkele Mene requests the pleasure of the company of

Mr. David Allan EMOLOT
Chairperson, ICOYACA

Date: **Thursday, 24th of November, 2022**
Venue: **Niamey - Niger**

RSVP: Fatoumata | +233 59 709 7230

The Chairperson's presentation focused on creating awareness amongst the [African Union](#) Heads of State & Government & Development Partners about the structural exclusion of youth in Africa's Industrialization Agenda & the need for Women & Youth in Trade to be given the same priority.

In his presentation, the chairperson gave an example of youth exclusion stating that, unlike the Women in Trade who had three panels allocated to them focusing on capacity building & opportunity sharing in addition to a side event i.e., Women in Industrialisation Summit, youth were not given a priority at all, he had to struggle to make Youth voices heard in various panel discussions. To better understand the structural exclusion of youth, the [AfCFTA Youth Advisory Council](#) was the only youth organisation represented & if it wasn't for [International Trade Centre](#) support, the youth wouldn't have had our voices heard.

He urged the [African Union](#) Heads of State & Government & Development Partners to go beyond words of referring to Africa's Youthful population as a demographic dividend that needs to be harnessed to effect development and focus on capacitating this youthful population to take charge of their own development. Just like the women in trade, he argued that the youth in Trade also deserve the same opportunities and priorities.

In conclusion, the chairperson called upon the [African Union](#) Heads of State & Government & Development Partners to firstly, give equal support to Youth in trade as the women in trade. Secondly, to financially support youth organisations championing youth engagement in the AfCFTA implementation processes such as the AfCFTA Youth Advisory Council, [YouLead Africa](#) and among others. Thirdly to develop a Youth in Trade mainstreaming policy to ensure meaningfully Youth engagement in the National AfCFTA Implementation Strategies.



The seminar sought to achieve the following:

1. Raise awareness on the status of the negotiations and implementation of the AfCFTA
2. Sensitise the business community on trade and investment opportunities available under the AfCFTA as well as the tools and instruments developed to support the private sector
3. Share with the Business Community the main findings of the provisional report on the private sector mapping and get their views on the report
4. Share the AfCFTA private sector engagement strategy
5. Establish a private sector led platform within the secretariat for AfCFTA implementation
6. Launch of the AfCFTA glossary for small businesses
7. Launch of World Bank publication on the AfCFTA

Details on how the events were accomplished can be found in the article written by the AfCFTA Secretariat which can be accessed [here](#).

The Chairperson also used that opportunity to attend several sessions around the AfCFTA and network with various trade leaders in the continent and globe. He had the privilege to meet H.E Albert M. Muchanga, commissioner for Trade and Industry of the African Union Commission, Madam Pamela Coke Hamilton, Executive Director-International Trade Centre and Mr. Prudence Sebahizi, AfCFTA Secretariat Chief Technical Officer.



Draft ICOYACH

2022

Continental Boot Camps on the AfCFTA

Working closely with our mother entity Youlead Africa and in partnership with the AfCFTA Secretariat supported by development partners such as UNDP, UNECA among others, we were able to organise two bootcamps last year.

Continental Bootcamp Training on AfCFTA for under 40 CEOs from 10th to 12th October 2022 in Kigali, Rwanda.

An inclusive and structurally transformational African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) will be realized through young entrepreneurs who are pivotal in Africa's production and trade landscape. In this context on the 10th – 12th October 2022, the Independent Continental Youth Advisory Council on AfCFTA (ICOYACA) in collaboration with MSTCDC/YouLead Africa, UNDP Regional Bureau for Africa, the AfCFTA Secretariat, the Ministry of Youth and Culture-Republic of Rwanda, and the Youth Connekt Africa Hub organized a Continental Bootcamp Training on AfCFTA for a select of Africa's Under 40 CEOs and Entrepreneurs. The participants later proceeded to participate in the Youth Connekt Summit which happened the same week from the 13th to 15th October 2022.

The 3-day Continental Bootcamp brought over 50 “champions” young CEOs and entrepreneurs across the continent. Through training sessions and networking, the young entrepreneurs were able to get a better understanding of the AfCFTA and position themselves as key stakeholders and contributors in accelerating implementation of the free trade area including through creating awareness in their business communities.

The key recommendations emanating from the Boot camp were:

- Scale up interventions to raise awareness on AfCFTA among youth
- Promote dialogues among youth and national governments to identify and solve bottlenecks with a view to fully unlock AfCFTA potential for young entrepreneurs
- Tap into the networks of youth including the Youth Connekt Africa, especially its national chapters as well as schools and universities to create awareness on the AfCFTA
- Fast track the growth of MSMEs into formalization through dedicated support

- UNDP should invest in bridging the capacity of youth business in marketing and branding their products and services while advocating consumption of made-in Africa products across youth. Communities
- UNDP should design financial literacy programme to bridge finance gaps to youth-led entrepreneurs

Key deliberations emanating from the learning and exchanges are as follows:

- Seizing opportunities for producing and trading under the AfCFTA requires good understanding of the Agreement
- Youths at the Forefront of intra-African Trade
- Making the AfCFTA work for Youths

YouLead Africa Bootcamp on Youth Inclusion in Social Economic Development and Policy Formulation in Africa

The Independent Continental Youth Advisory Council on AfCFTA (ICOYACA) in collaboration with MSTCDC/YouLead Africa, the East African Business Council and with support from Danida Fellowship Centre conducted a continental bootcamp on youth inclusion in social economic development and policy formulation in Africa on 05th - 10th December 2022. The participants then proceeded to attend the Youlead Africa Summit 2022.

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