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EDITORIAL

"Editor is on assignment and will return next week with a fresh Editorial"

EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT

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ADJUSTMENT FACILITY FUND TO GIVE AfCFTA TRADING SIGNIFICANT BOOST

H.E Wamkele Mene, Secretary General of the AfCFTA Secretariat (left) and Professor Benedict Oramah, President and Chairman of the Board of Directors of Afreximbank (right) during the signing of agreement for the management of the AfCFTA Adjustment Fund. The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Secretariat in conjunction with the African Export-Import Bank (Afreximbank) has introduced the AfCFTA Adjustment Facility Fund to support Party States cope with the new liberalized and integrated trading environment. It has been reported that the resources required for the Adjustment Fund over the next 5-10 years are estimated at US\$10 billion. In a recent press release by Afreximbank, it was revealed that the bank has already committed \$1 billion towards the AfCFTA Adjustment Fund.

Facility fund was to cushion the category of countries who would be marginalized by the Free Trade. "These are countries who were going to be marginalized due to their low productive capacity and could not withstand the shocks for the first years of the liberalization," he noted. He said the funding facility, which is more or less contributions from member states, will not apply interest rates to beneficiaries. The AfCFTA expert said the fund has been categorized into two, namely the general fund and the base fund. He said the base fund in particular would be used to support countries' efforts under the pillars of the Boosting Intra Africa Trade for example, trade infrastructure. According to him, the adjustment fund is in no way intended to make up for budget shortfalls of governments but would be disbursed based on merit.

explained saying, "the supervisory agency of this AfCFTA in each country is the Ministries of Trade. Therefore, it is reasonable to say that Ministries of Trade will come out with plans and arrangements for the various companies under their supervision. So, it would be easier if a company belongs to an association, such as AGI, GUTA, Chamber of Commerce. Corporations, and structured groups with strong potential are going to be the target of Afreximbank."

"The AfCFTA expert also said one of the benefits of the adjustment facility is in the provision of technical assistance to governments and other AfCFTA players in the continent. He stressed on the need to provide potential exporters market intelligence of the export market of party states. He urged African countries to capitalize on their comparative advantages within the AfCFTA trade and beyond. "The whole idea of AfCFTA is about finding means of trading among ourselves, as

Africans and how we stop exporting only the raw materials outside Africa. Why does Kenya's coffee not find its way into Ethiopia market? This is what we are trying to change." "The AfCFTA secretariat will be publishing what they call Africa Trade Observatory, a website where countries will publish all the list of products they want to liberalize. In the event a country wants to change, they would have to write to the AfCFTA for a go ahead," he added.

Louis Afful, who is the Executive Director of the AfCFTA Policy Network, hinted at the need for more financial institutions like the Afreximbank to support the Continental Free Trade. According to him, when more banks are established with an AfCFTA orientation, interest rates on loans would be reduced to support low cost of production which would give African products competitive advantage on the world market.

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AfCFTA is about finding means of trading among ourselves, as Africans and how we stop exporting only the raw materials outside Africa. Why does Kenya's coffee not find its way into Ethiopia market? This is what we are trying to change." "The AfCFTA secretariat will be publishing what they call Africa Trade Observatory, a website where countries will publish all the list of products they want to liberalize. In the event a country wants to change, they would have to write to the AfCFTA for a go ahead," he added.

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PAPSS WILL MAKE BUSINESS TRANSACTIONS CONVENIENT UNDER AFCFTA

Business transactions under African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) are expected to be made convenient and efficient with the introduction of the Pan African Payment and Settlement System (PAPSS). The PAPSS, initiated by the Afreximbank with endorsement from the various heads of states, will ensure that the plurality of currencies do not become a hindrance to trade.

An AfCFTA expert and trade practitioner, Louis Yaw Afful explained how the PAPSS works. He says, "an

individual will just need to go to his commercial bank, advise his commercial bank that he wants to transfer using PAPSS. It is important to make that instruction. "So, whatever amount he or she wants to transfer to someone in Nigeria, Senegal, anywhere in Africa, he does not need your currency. You don't need the dollar." The bank using PAPSS will settle in his Currency, and you will receive it in your currency. This eliminates the bottlenecks and the delays. It takes just about eight seconds." He revealed that many enormous benefits reside with the PAPSS introduction including benefits to financial technology companies.

Mr. Afful said, "commercial banks who have ICT or FinTech firms as clients can out source and give them the opportunity." PAPSS Can

work closely with these third-party firms to support a bit of what they do. It would not only be a government machinery between central bank to central bank" He described the PAPSS as a major milestone that would not only make trade easier but would save Africa billions of dollars.

Mr. Louis Yaw Afful, who is the Executive Director of the AfCFTA Policy Network indicated that due to the use of Visa and Credit cards, "80% of transfers hit outside Africa before coming down and it is estimated that it leads to 5 billion of loss every year.

Source: thebftonline.com

SA WANTS SINGLE AFRICAN CURRENCY TO BOOST INTRA-CONTINENTAL TRADE

South Africa is in full support of establishing a single African currency backed by the continental central bank and monetary institute.

According to International Relations and Cooperation Minister Naledi Pandor, the establishment of the African Union's (AU) African Central Bank (ACB), African Investment Bank (AIB) and the African Monetary Institute (AMI) are considered critical to facilitate a single currency and boost the intra-Africa trade.

"In every available continental platform, South Africa has consistently reaffirmed her commitment to continuing to support the continental integration in line with the provisions of the Abuja Treaty of 1991 which seeks to assist the AU member states to overcome trade barriers that impede the flow of goods, services and capital," Pandor said

This emerged in Pandor's response to a written parliamentary question from EFF

MP Thembi Portia Msane.

Pandor said the "operationalisation" of the African Continental Free Trade Area Agreement (AfCFTA) and the start of trading on 1 January 2021 are viewed as catalysts for long-term continental "prosperity and integration".

"It is against this background that the establishment of the African Union Financial Institutions (AUFIs) comprising the ACB, the AIB and the AMI are considered as critical to facilitate the creation of a single currency and boost the intra-Africa trade.

"These institutions form a key component of the flagship projects of Agenda 2063," she said.

Furthermore, Pandor said South Africa utilises its participation at AU statutory meetings to call for the establishment of the AUFIs and the subsequent realisation of a single currency.

"It is for this reason that during the 12th Extraordinary session of the AU Assembly in July 2019 in Niamey, Niger, South Africa supported the launch of the operational instruments of the AfCFTA, which included amongst others the digital payment system. The launch of the AfCFTA instruments is a remarkable achievement following the entry into force of the AfCFTA," she said.

Pandor also said the August 2021 Southern African Development Community (SADC) summit reaffirmed the bloc's position to create a SADC central bank and monetary union.

According to Pandor, this is a long-term objective in creating harmonisation of SADC countries' fiscal and monetary policies.

"In this regard, the African Monetary Institute and the African Central Bank should be long-term objectives."

To that end, South Africa is encouraged by the AU Assembly decision from the recently concluded summit in February 2022, which directed the AfCFTA secretariat and the AU Commission to continue to work with the Association of African Central Banks (AACB) to finalise the negotiations on all the outstanding technical issues particularly the macroeconomic convergence criteria which remains a hurdle in the early operationalisation of the AUFIs.

"The negotiation process on the matter is currently underway; South Africa reaffirms its readiness to work with all stakeholders and in cooperation with other AU Member states to ensure that all outstanding technical issues are addressed expeditiously," she said Pandor said the suggestion that South Africa is not advocating for creating a single currency on the "continent is incorrect".



WAPIS: A MODERN TOOL IN COMBATING REGIONAL CRIME

The West African Police Information System (WAPIS) launch at the Criminal Investigations Department (CID) headquarters in Freetown represents a huge progress in amplifying the capacity of the security sector. The digital security capacity has positioned Sierra Leone at a vantage point in combating transnational organized crime across the West African Sub-region.

During the inauguration of WAPIS, Ambrose Sovula the Inspector General of police assured the participants that the effective functioning of the WAPIS system is high among the priorities for the Sierra Leone Police and that all partners are guaranteed of the organizations unwavering commitment in this regard.

This is a timely development, at a period the region is grappling with enormous and multiple security challenges. Located at the upper Guinea coast, the country would serve as the nucleus in exchanging police information in ECOWAS member states and Mauritania. The idea that triggers the formation of WAPIS emanates from a common security reality in the region. A legitimate concern ignited by the burgeoning spate of illegal activities that has marred the region.

Trans organized crime is proliferating. Drug trafficking, carjacking, money laundering, counterfeiting, migrant smuggling and armed robbery are common occurrences.

Piracy is becoming profitable in the region. The gulf of Guinea has overtaken the Gulf of Aden in acts of piracy for ransom in Africa. The region is further contending with cybercrime and international terrorism. Islamic radicals and other criminals are increasingly attracted to the region, taking advantage of porous borders and weak security infrastructure. Vulnerabilities are easily exploited. Security slits at national, regional and international level has enticed criminals in making the region a hub for illegal activities. Such illicit acts have the potential to destabilize the economy and could equally jeopardize the stability and security of any state.

For intelligence agencies, underestimating the threats such menacing activities pose to the tranquility and security of the state could be a huge miscalculation.

For example if authorities can destroy the market for drugs it would become unavailable for consumption.

If drug law enforcement agencies succeed in annihilating the market for drugs, it is like cutting the head of a serpent where in drug consumption on a massive scale would be adequately contained.

Nipping the menace on time before the majority of youths become addicted would save a national catastrophe. Drugs could render a whole generation of countrymen useless due to substance infatuation, as with the peril posed by the substance called KUSH on the lives of young people.

More dangerous, could be acts of piracy, cyber-attacks and terrorism which could lead to loss of lives and the disruption of a country's economy. The instability posed by Islamic jihadist has led to the overthrow of democratically elected governments in Mali and Burkina Faso in West Africa. In both

ECOWAS member states, insecurity perpetrated by Islamic extremist was peddled as the preeminent factor by the military to chase out popular elected presidents. The strategy is used as a pretext by the military to create junta governments.

After accessing power through coups, the military further consolidates its power and forestalls the return to constitutional rule. With the military visibly active in politics, the political future of Mali, Burkina Faso and even Guinea is marred by uncertainty. A contagion of military takeovers is brewing that also witnessed a coup attempt in Guinea Bissau, a country wrestling with drug transiting and trafficking. Other people's oriented governments across the region are jittery over fears of a spillover of coups.

The existential threat posed by Jihadist terrorism to elected governments should not be underestimated. It is a reality and the danger is never far away. Brazenly, they have infiltrated the Mano river sub-region by hitting targets at beaches in Ivory Coast frequented by western nationals. Wherever terrorist attacks are rife, the military can easily provide justification for a coup to legitimize seizure of power. Therefore, any foresighted government must prioritize the need to prevent attacks from Islamic jihadist on its territory.

Another realistic threat to the economic stability and security of any state has to do with cybercrimes. Countries and groups engage in cyber-attack to achieve military and political advantage. Cybercrime can span multiple jurisdictions and the anonymity of cyberspace makes identity tracing a significant problem that can hinder police investigation. When the United States of America (USA) took down the Iranian general Kassim Suleimani in January 2021 through the use of a drone attack, some of the retaliatory measures by Iran included cyber-attacks on American economic interest. The Sierra Leone Commercial Bank whose cyber infrastructure was connected to an ecosystem in USA had its digital financial services disrupted for couple of days. Even though the system was later restored, the danger cyber exploits can pose thousands of miles away was manifested by the SLCB cyber-attack. The implications of cyber-attacks can be overarching. Apart from causing deaths, it can bring a country's economy to its knees.

Data can be stolen by hackers, leading to operational disruption and reputational damage for institutions and companies. With the establishment of WAPIS, cyber resilience would be gradually enhanced. This could be made possible by building a resilient ecosystem in West Africa which facilitates the sharing of timely and actionable cyber security information through proactive detection of threats. Tackling globalized threats such as cyber-attacks cannot be done alone and in isolation. Threats that are stimulated by globalization must only be tackled through multilateral cooperation as manifested with the creation of WAPIS.

By working concertedly, through effective police information exchange, the threats posed by felonious element operating across frontiers would be minimized to the lowest ebb.

Therefore, the operationalization of WAPIS from Freetown is geared towards a security guarantee for the people of West Africa and beyond.

The WAPIS system in Sierra Leone will improve the country's capacity to respond to national, regional and international criminal threats.

By bringing together all security and law enforcement bodies, the center will collect, centralize, manage and analyze data from criminal cases in a digital format.

Information is then shared electronically, among national law enforcement bodies and other countries in the region and INTERPOL which is the central hub.

The migration from paper police records to an electronics police data exchange system is a significant catch up with what transpires in advance countries.

It has enhanced the capacity of the police to better prevent and tackle crime.

The system will allow the processing of data collected during criminal investigations such as types of offences, bio data, vehicle registration, traveling documents, etc.

However, the WAPIS programme should not be used to violate people's rights.

Legal questions and sensitive issues regarding the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms must be adequately dealt with. As police information system contains sensitive data, such as personal data-WAPIS must operate within an appropriate legal framework. It has been emphasized that participating countries in the WAPIS programme must comply with international conventions such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, United Nations Charter, African Charter on Human and People's right and the ECOWAS treaty and its supplementary protocols on personal data protection.

PRESS RELEASE: 2022 U.S.-AFRICA BUSINESS SUMMIT TO BE HOSTED IN MOROCCO



ABOUT CORPORATE COUNCIL ON AFRICA (CCA)

Corporate Council on Africa is the leading U.S. business association focused solely on connecting business interests between the United States and Africa. CCA uniquely represents a broad cross section of member companies from small and medium size businesses to multinationals as well as U.S. and African firms. Learn more at www.corporatecouncilonafrika.com

March 10, 2022

Corporate Council on Africa (CCA) will organize the next edition of the U.S.-Africa Business Summit on July 19 – 22, 2022 in Marrakech, Morocco. The Summit will build on the momentum of last year's virtual Summit, which focused on the unique opportunity for the new U.S. Administration and its African partners to reset and redefine their relationship as they work together to shape the path for economic recovery needed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. After 2 years, CCA will return to the continent this July for the 14th iteration of its flagship conference.

“We are delighted to co-host and partner with the Government of the Kingdom of Morocco to bring the 2022 Summit to Marrakech. The 2021 Summit was a tremendous success and the caliber of engagement by U.S. and African business and government leaders was outstanding. The partnerships forged, investment opportunities identified, and deals closed are still being cited by attendees. We believe the 2022 Summit in Morocco will be even more successful and serve as a significant opportunity to expand and deepen the U.S.-Africa trade, investment, and business relationship.” said Florizelle Liser, President and CEO, Corporate Council on Africa.

Following a strategic selection process, CCA's Board of Directors selected the Kingdom of Morocco as the host for the 2020 Summit, but due to the global pandemic, it was canceled. Having signed

the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA) and a leading investor in Africa, Morocco has demonstrated its commitment to promoting economic development in the continent, making it an ideal destination for the 2022 Summit and the first time CCA will organize the Summit in North Africa.

Her Highness Princess Lalla Jouvla, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Morocco to the United States, urged businesses to take advantage of the unique opportunities that will be presented at the Summit in 2022. “As the gateway to Africa, Morocco is committed to increasing business and investment on the continent and is pleased to partner with the Corporate Council on Africa to host the 2022 U.S.-Africa Business Summit in Marrakech.”

This year's Summit - themed “Building Forward Together” - will explore the U.S. and African public and private sectors' renewed commitment to building stronger trade and investment ties during unprecedented health and economic challenges.

Since its inception in 1997, CCA's Summit has been considered as the essential conference on U.S.-Africa business and investment. With over 1200 attendees representing 65 countries, the 2021 virtual Summit witnessed a remarkable level of engagement, including participation by 6 African heads of state, 22 senior African officials, 3 U.S.

Government Cabinet Level officials, 12 senior U.S. government officials and an exceptional line-up of global business leaders from a variety of sectors.

ABOUT THE U.S.-AFRICA BUSINESS SUMMIT

The U.S.-Africa Business Summit serves as a platform for African and U.S. private sector and government representatives to engage on key sectors including agribusiness, energy, health, infrastructure, trade facilitation, ICT and finance. Summit participants can network with key private sector and government officials, explore new business opportunities, meet potential business partners, and forge new business deals. The Summit also serves as an opportunity to shape and advocate for effective U.S.-Africa trade and investment policies.

Over the last 23 years, CCA has hosted more than 50 U.S. and African Heads of State and over 15,000 participants at its Summits.

JEX Travel and Tours is a one-stop agency which provides personalized responsive travel services to corporate organizations, groups and individuals locally and globally. We believe our client's cumbersome travel arrangement should be left to us, allowing our clients to increase productivity and focus on their core business. Hence, our team is dedicated to providing you with the best, efficient and effective travel consulting services by supporting you with a round the clock services giving you the best rates and fares and timely response to your travel request while applying sustainable measures that aims at reducing the negative social, cultural, economic and environmental impact of our companies activities.

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We are hopeful that we can contribute to the uplifting of your company's image through our travel consultancy and other areas of your business. We are available at your earliest convenience to explore ways in which we can offer our service to your benefit.

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REQUEST FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST:

Recruitment of a Consultant for the Development of Communication Actions for a Better Knowledge of the Regional Competition Framework and Visibility of the Actions of the Ecowas Regional Competition Authority"

(Consulting services – individual consultant selection)
From: 15/03/2022 to 7/04/2022
Client: ECOWAS Commission
Type: Expression of Interest (EOI)
Title: Recruitment of a Consultant for the Development of Communication Actions *for a Better Knowledge of the Regional Competition Framework *and Visibility of the Actions of the Ecowas Regional Competition Authority

Reference No. N° ECW/ERCA-CTCF/ADM/ (DU (006) /15/03/1

In the framework of the execution of the 2021 Budget, ECOWAS Regional Competition Authority (ERCA) intends to apply a portion its budgeted funds for Recruitment of a Consultant for the Communication Actions for a Better Knowledge of the Regional Competition Framework and Visibility of the Actions of the Ecowas Regional Competition Authority

I - BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

In 2008, ECOWAS adopted a Regional Competition Policy and, at the same time, established the ECOWAS Regional Competition Authority (ERCA) responsible for its implementation. This regional initiative aims to support and promote the free play of competition within the ECOWAS region and the protection of consumers' economic interests through the implementation of the Community Competition Rules. The awareness-raising, information and advocacy activities carried out during the second half of 2021 in six (6) Member States revealed a lack of knowledge of the regional competition mechanism and of the ERCA among the majority of national actors. Having effectively launched its activities only in 2019, the ERCA's relative operational youth could largely justify the limited awareness of its existence and activities.

In an effort to strengthen dialogue and information sharing among all stakeholders, as well as to raise awareness of this recent mechanism for promoting competition within ECOWAS, the ERCA has decided to strengthen its communication activities. The outlines of this proactive communication are described in a global plan, the implementation of which should improve the visibility of the ERCA and its action. This plan should include information and awareness-raising activities to significantly improve knowledge of the ECOWAS Competition Policy and the ERCA.

II - THE OBJECTIVES

The main objective of this work is to prepare a communication plan that will describe the actions to

carry out among all private and public economic actors operating on the regional market and consumers in order to strengthen their knowledge of the ECOWAS Competition Policy and the ERCA itself. In this respect, the objectives of the Communication Plan could be broken down as follows:

inform the national competition structures and economic operators about the regional competition provisions and the opportunities they offer to extend their actions beyond the national borders. No national competition authority can extend its actions beyond the national borders.

Basically, it is the impact of their actions or those of companies operating on the national territory that could go beyond these national borders; promote public awareness of the importance of implementing the competition policy and law for the improvement of product quality, lower prices, innovation and fairness in the markets, for the benefit of the final consumer; enhance the ERCA's visibility in the public opinion as a regional agency, concerned with the improvement of the free competition conditions for the well-being of the Community's populations.

III - THE TARGETS

The information and communication actions to be implemented will be aimed at four (04) categories of targets which could be grouped as follows:

1st category: the national competition structures of the Community Member States which are the key players in the implementation of the Community competition rules. This category forms one of the main targets on which most of the information actions will be focused;

2nd category: the state actors (all national competition structures are State actors, category 1), in particular Ministries, Government Agencies, Legal and Judicial Systems of the fifteen (15) Member States for a better national appropriation and domestication of the Community Competition Rules. Because of their status as decision-makers in terms of market regulation, which pass and enforce laws, this category is key to the internalisation and application of Community competition provisions;

3rd category: the actors operating in the business community who intervene in the production system and in commercial exchanges in the regional and enterprises involved in the manufacturing, distribution and service sectors;

4th category: this is the general public to whom the information will be relayed through various transmission channels. This category includes non-governmental organisations, civil society, opinion-makers and consumers whose defence of economic interests is one of the main objectives entrusted to the

ERCA.

IV - ACTIONS TO BE IMPLEMENTED

For better efficiency, the actions to be implemented will be grouped according to the main stages of the communication actions towards the stakeholders and the general public.

Phase 1: Design Creation or update of the database that contains the names and addresses of all the structures to which the information and awareness-raising materials are sent;

Conception, writing and sending of personalised and/or general messages to the targets; Creation and popularisation of awareness and information campaign spots; Adaptation and popularisation of the ERCA website.

As the Internet has become an essential working tool for information and awareness-raising, the creation of a specific space for this purpose could inform the national competition structures and economic operators about the regional competition provisions and the opportunities they offer to extend their actions beyond the national borders. No national competition authority can extend its actions beyond the national borders.

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3rd category: the actors operating in the business community who intervene in the production system and in commercial exchanges in the regional market. In this case, we are talking about the companies and enterprises involved in the manufacturing, distribution and service sectors;

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Phase 2: Communication activities

Although not exhaustive, this list of communication channels could be explored while clearly presenting the modalities of their use in the

framework of the ERCA actions.

Media coverage: In order to reach the general public, the activities of the ERCA will be covered and widely relayed in ECOWAS Member States by the national and international media, which will be invited to do so;

Virtual meetings: The aim is to organise online meetings in order to deliver clear and heart-breaking messages, focusing on the promotion of free competition and the need to take ownership of the regional competition framework;

Mailing: Using the list of addresses compiled by the ERCA, advertisement and information messages will be sent by e-mail to stakeholders so that they are regularly informed about ongoing activities;

Press release: When the ERCA's activities take place, a one-page press release will be published in facilitate direct access to information by stakeholders. In addition, for the sake of increased efficiency, this web

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are regularly informed about ongoing activities;

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Broadcasting messages on mainstream media: Given the wide international audience of these media, messages could be broadcast on these channels during major events. In this respect, the ERCA could enter into a partnership with a media outlet in order to give more credibility to the message and to lower the costs of dissemination.

Broadcasting of radio and television spots, including on rural radio stations; Dissemination of messages on social networks: These internet platforms are widely used by the general public and constitute an important channel of information and dissemination of ERCA's actions;

Advertising (kakemonos): Kakemono-format posters will be designed and displayed at the centres in the offices of the ERCA and at certain events. The message on the kakemonos should be short and punchy, with a clear informative character;

Press kit: A press kit providing useful and comprehensive documentation on the Prize will be made available to journalists invited to cover the launch ceremony;

Publication and distribution of an information leaflet: produced and circulated during the main ERCA events;

Publication of a press release: prepared and posted on the ERCA website, the ECOWAS Commission's communication channels and in the national newspaper of each Member State of the Community in order to inform public opinion of the existence of the regional competition framework and to prepare minds for the ERCA's next intervention;

Production of a press book: With the aim of providing a documentation on the basis of media coverage in the written press in particular, a press book could be produced from newspaper clippings; Conception and popularisation of the annual report of the ERCA's activities in all possible

communication spaces the international press, particularly in a well-known magazine such as "Jeune Afrique". The use of this magazine, which is renowned for the quality of its publications and its wide readership, will make it possible to reach out in particular to partners living in or outside the region;

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annual report of the ERCA's activities in all possible communication spaces.

Phase 3: Follow-up and monitoring/evaluation

An informational follow-up by the ERCA and an evaluation could be envisaged in order to identify the communication impact of its actions and to propose the implementation of specific actions if necessary.

V - DELIVERABLES/ EXPECTED RESULTS

At the end of the service, the Consultant must provide a document containing a comprehensive communication plan on the ERCA's actions. In particular, he/she should present:

- a relevant list of potential targets;
- the communication actions to be considered and their implementing rules;
- an information monitoring mechanism.

VI - TIMETABLE

The work will be carried out according to the following timetable:

- the service will last thirty (30) days from the date of signing the contract;
- the Communication Plan should be submitted to the ERCA for review and comment;
- the final version of the database and related documents should be available one (01) week after the effective consideration of the ERCA's comments. It is expected that the final report clearly outlines the elements relevant to the objectives of the mission as mentioned above.

VII - CONSULTANT PROFILE

The Consultant must have a higher degree (at least Master's degree) in Communication or an equivalent qualification in the field. The Consultant must also have at least ten (10) years of experience in the field of communication and in particular in the development of communication plans. He/she must have a good knowledge of the ECOWAS media and press bodies and the new channels of communication.

VII Language

The individual consultant shall be fluent in one of the ECOWAS official languages (English, French or Portuguese) and the practical knowledge of another ECOWAS Official language will be an advantage.

NB: The attention of interested Individual consultants is particularly drawn to Article 118 of the ECOWAS Revised Procurement Code ("Infringements by Candidates, Bidders and Awardees"), providing information on corrupt or fraudulent practices in competing for or executing a contract. In addition, please refer to the following specific information on conflict of interest related to this assignment as per "Article 119 of the ECOWAS Revised Procurement Code.

The Consultants will be selected in

accordance with the Selection of Individual Consultant set out in the Consultant Guidelines. The shortlisted candidates will be interviewed for the position.

Interested consultants may obtain further information at the email addresses below during office hours:

Monday to Friday from 9.00 am GMT to 5.00 pm (GMT), The Gambia Time.

Email: knkuako@ecowas.int avec copie à : kkoffi@ecowas.int

Expressions of Interest (1 original and 3 copies) can be delivered in sealed envelopes and clearly marked

"Recruitment of a Consultant for the Communication Actions for a Better Knowledge of the Regional Competition Framework and Visibility of the Actions of the Ecowas Regional Competition Authority",

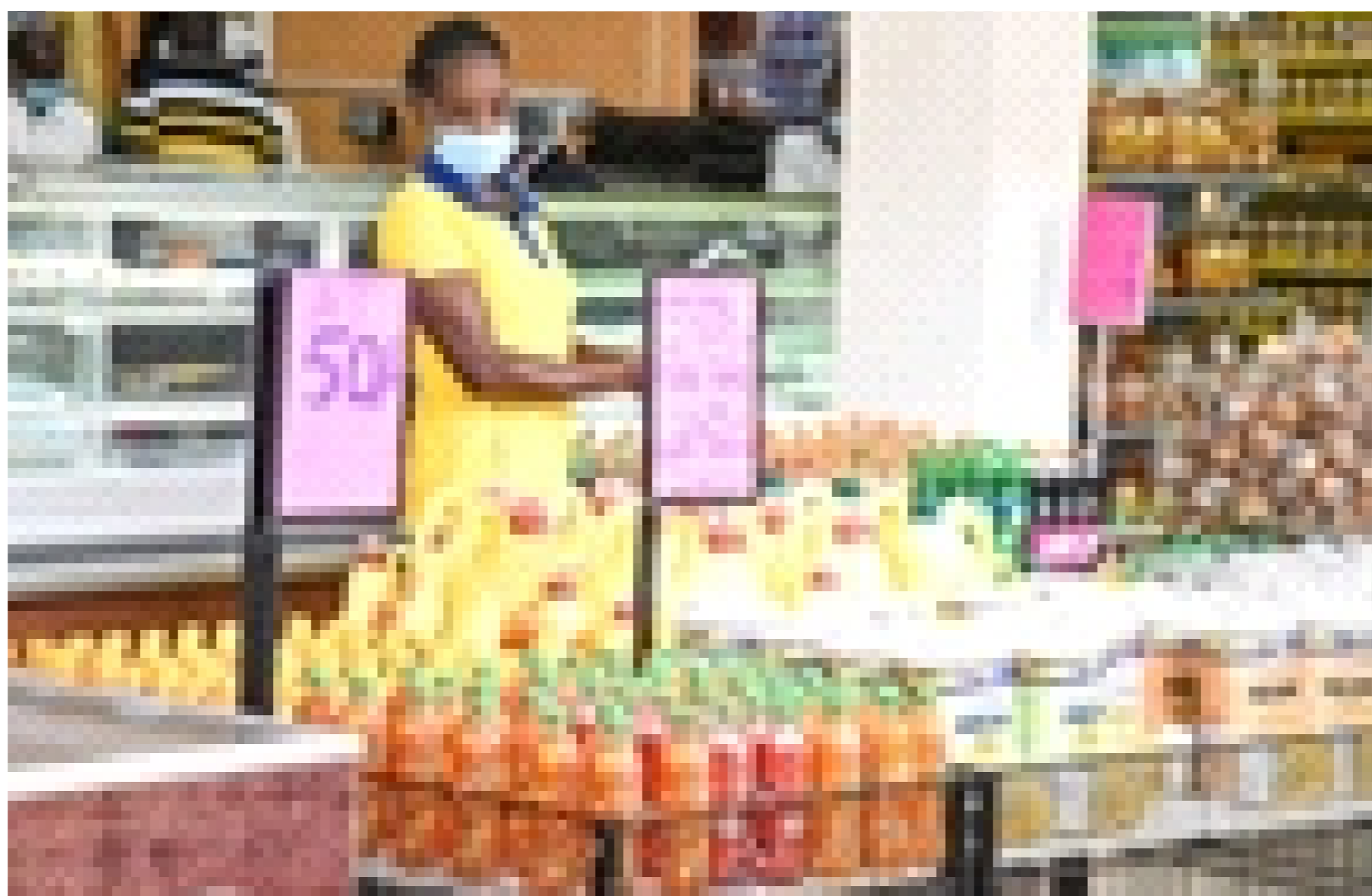
Do not open except in the presence of the Evaluation Committee" to the address below latest by April 7, 2022

at 11.00 am (GMT), The Gambia Time.

The Ecowas Regional Competitive Authority (ERCA) whose address is at Bertil Harding, KSMD, Bijilo, The Gambia P.O Box 4470 Tel :+2202330006/3486966.

Please note that electronic submissions are also accepted and shall be addressed to: knkuako@ecowas.int avec copie à : kkoffi@ecowas.int This EOI is also published on the ERCA and the ECOWAS websites info@arcc-erca.org and <http://www.ecowas.int/doing-business-in-ecowas/ecowasprocurement>

Ag. Executive Director ECOWAS Regional Competition Authority (ERCA)



HARD ECONOMIC TIMES IN EAST AFRICA AS COMMODITY PRICES GO THROUGH THE ROOF

IN SUMMARY

In Uganda, citizens are hanging on to the hope that a crisis meeting between the Prime Minister Robinah Nabbanja and manufacturers of soap, cooking oil, salt and other household items will lead to a reduction in the prices of essential commodities which have skyrocketed in recent weeks. In Kenya, such as Russia's invasion of Ukraine last month and the subsequent disruption of the global supply chain, citizens have been petitioning their governments to urgently find measures to cushion them.

Advertisement

March has been a hard month for the citizens of East Africa as the cost of living soared, leaving the poor staring at destitution and businesses reeling. While the situation has been largely blamed on external factors such as Russia's invasion of Ukraine last month and the subsequent disruption of the global supply chain, citizens have been petitioning their governments to urgently find measures to cushion them.

Talks on price reduction

In Uganda, for instance, citizens are hanging on to the hope that a crisis meeting between the Prime Minister Robinah Nabbanja and manufacturers of soap, cooking oil, salt and other household items will lead to a reduction in the prices of essential commodities which have skyrocketed in recent weeks.

Captains of industry warned last week that the cost of living on account of the surging prices of essential household items will get worse before it gets better as external shocks causing prices to skyrocket are not about to ease. Last week, the situation prompted a debate in Cabinet and parliament, which resulted in a meeting on Friday between the prime minister and executives of companies that manufacture household items, to persuade them to ease the prices and the cost of living.

source: The East African



Dr. Alexander Anim - Mensah has over twenty (20) years of diverse progressive industrial experiences with a history of delivering sustainable technical, business and management results through award winning performances.

Dr. Anim-Mensah is PhD Chemical Engineer who has made contributions to the membrane science and technology field among others defining a new membrane separation dimensionless number. He is an inventor, author and involved with over thirty (30) patents relating to machines, devices and efficient use of energy, water, and chemicals. Among his specialization is Intellectual Property Law and Policy, Technology, Operations and Value Chain Management, Business Strategy and Marketing Mix Implementation. He co-authored two (2) books, two (2) books chapters, and several technical papers in the field of membrane science and technology and biomedical applications.

His expertise relating to water include testing, analysis interpretation, characterization, chemistry, water (i.e., fresh water, brackish & seawater) /wastewater treatment & systems design, material compatibility, costing, construction, installation, and commissioning. He worked for both Siemens Water Technologies and Veolia Water Technologies, all in the USA.

Dr. Anim-Mensah is the President of i2iMegaHub (NGO), an NGO providing support especially to the African youth to turn their viable ideas into positive global impacts. Also, he is the Director of Academic-Industry Relation for the African Membrane Society (AMSIC) (www.sam-ptf.com/directors.html)

The original article was published on Monday October 3, 2011, at the Opinions Section of Ghanaweb. This article earned the author the opportunity to share insight on water on JoyFM's Super Morning Show in December

2012 when bottled water market was growing steeply in Ghana. Few modifications have been made on the version presented here.

PURIFIED DRINKING WATER - WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Water is considered as life, but that cannot be the case if the quality is compromised. It is worth to know what one is consuming, thus ensuring the benefits derived is indeed helping to keep a life. This piece is to serve an educational purpose on what could turn out to be an "unknown bought fatality" from consuming poor or bad quality water under the pretext of buying quality purified or treated drinking water. Some observations have prompted me to point out some risks that lie in consuming some waters that may need better or further treatment.

People usually are of the view that once water tastes good, it's from a bore hole, collected rainwater or packaged, etc., then it is always good quality drinking water. Water is more complicated than usually known and depending on its application; the definition of good or bad water is relative. While most of us might not be balancing our diets, cannot afford nor have access to proper medical/health care, etc. we should at least promise ourselves better drinking water.

Note that on average 60% of the human body is made up of water and water with some specific characteristics is necessary for the body's proper functioning. The human water content varies based on gender, age and/or hydration levels. Water covers about 70% of the earth's surface, however, the amount of fresh water is limited and dwindling every day.

In Ghana, I tasted some of the locally packaged drinking water both bottled and in sachet and detected differences in the taste. In addition, I observed the numerous water packaging labels and how it changed over short distances. It appeared that water purification and packaging are among the best businesses of the day.

While it is a good business venture, have people asked themselves about which of these water products sold on the market are very safe for human consumption as well as their worth? The following questions came to mind.....do people think all these

waters are the same? What are some of the water sources for some of these small purification or treatment businesses - boreholes, river, wells, municipal, etc? Do some of these businesses really understand water? Is water quantity related to quality?

Are the treatment processes hygienic enough? Is the purified or bottled water business a low capital intensive venture and what water sources are being considered?

Are some really treating the water, and to what extent? How resourceful and ready are some businesses in treating extremely poor-quality source water for drinking?

What bodies are ensuring that all these small local water companies abide by some set of requirements, or regulations, which are enforced? Are these companies or their products regularly monitored for quality or ensure meeting the quality of what the label says?

Is extremely purified or pure water good for drinking? Could poor water quality be a silent killer? Are there simple tests one can perform on these packaged waters to determine which ones are good? How does one know he/she is buying good quality drink water?

Answering some of the above questions - Are all waters the same?

No! All waters are not the same....water varies from place to place, and some will require more treatment than the other to achieve the minimum safe drinking quality as specified by the World Health Organization (WHO). You will be surprised to know the difference in properties of water from a borehole about 100 meters apart; one safe and the other extremely unsafe for drinking. How does one ensure he/she is drinking quality water?

There are sets of tests that need to be performed on water to determine the type of contaminants and their levels, which the contaminants levels could change over the different seasons. These tests can be classified into physical,

chemical, and biological. Physical include appearance, color, particles suspended/cloudy/opaque (turbidity), etc. Chemical test is for determining the types of metals (including heavy metals), salts, toxics (including pesticides, herbicides, petroleum,) gases, etc., while the biological test is for microorganisms including bacteria, viruses, etc. in the water. Most of the above needs to be tested a certified lab.

Is water quantity related to quality?

Abundance of water from a borehole, well, river, etc. does not necessarily mean the water is of good quality for consumption. You will require some testing to establish the quality of the water for consumption or treatment. However, water quality depends on the local geology, rainfall pattern, ecosystem as well as human influence including landfill leaching, sewage dispersion, industrial pollution, etc.

Is purified water treatment and bottling a low capital intensive venture in Ghana?

Depending on the water source and anticipated quality required, the purification or treatment processes could be relatively capital intensive, both initial and operating. Some bad water will require removing everything from the source water and afterwards adding your own mineral supplements or would require blending to achieve safe quality - this may be expensive.

Is there any simple test and treatment one can perform on water for protection?

Oftentimes unsophisticated tests which include appearance, smell and taste are used, which in some cases might not be enough. We all could taste, smell, and observe the appearance of some quality bottled or packaged water. As well different manufacturers could have their products with some characteristics smell, taste and appearance, and anything from that could be a cause for



concern. This means one must do some research on which manufacturers water one wants to consume regularly to be familiar with the characteristics taste, smell, and appearance to differentiate them from other manufacturers, counterfeit ones or if you are not just consuming untreated bottled tap or well water.

Obviously, water with some color, being cloudy, has some suspended particles, tastes funny, etc. if not added by the manufacturer as differentiator and has no benefits is a cause for alarm. Moreover, bottled water like any package product is expected to have an expiry date. The following bulleted points below are some few information on the different substances' maximum levels in water and their effects to help suggested some counterfeit or not well treated packaged water. Moreover, the bulleted points do not suggest that the water is harmful to health at the maximum level, however, the impacts on taste, appearance and smell may render it undrinkable by many personal standards. Above the maximum level could be of a concern. Note that some bottled spring water or carbonated water could have some of the below bulleted characteristics.

- A salty taste in water may be associated with either chloride (Cl) or sulphate (SO₄) above 250 ppm or the combinations.
- A rusty color, sediments, metallic taste, reddish or orange staining is water may be associated with iron (Fe) above 0.3 ppm. Moreover, high presence of iron could indicate possible existence of iron oxidizing bacteria.
- Black to brown color, black staining, bitter metallic taste is water may be associated manganese (Mn) above 0.05 ppm
- Bitter metallic taste may be associated with water having pH of 6.5 or below while slippery feel, soda taste, deposits associated with water having pH of 8.5 or above.
- A metallic taste in water may be associated with zinc (Zn) above 5 ppm
- "Rotten-egg", musty or chemical smell in water may be associated with the presence of sulfate reducing bacteria
- A metallic taste and blue-green staining in water may be associated with copper above 1.0 ppm
- Water with total dissolved solid (TDS) of 500 ppm and above may be associated with high levels of hardness (i.e., calcium (Ca) and magnesium (Mg)), deposits, colored water, staining, and salty taste. *TDS is the sum of all ions dissolved in water.* This can be determined by boiling a known volume of water off to determine amount of the deposit left. Portable hand-held pH, conductivity and TDS meters are available.

One can observe under light closely (say

day light, flashlight, etc.) to reveal cloudiness, suspended or foreign particles. Moreover, cloudy water can be allowed to sit to settle and then decanted or filtered using a clean cloth. For extremely purified or pure water especially those with minimal ions like distilled or reverse osmosis (RO) water, the time it takes the water to form ice in a refrigerator (not the freezer) could be helpful for comparing with another purified one with good ionic balance. An extremely purified water which has low or no ionic content is expected to take a shorter time to start forming ice compared with water with good ionic balance. Boiling is known to kill microorganisms as well as remove gases, however, boiling for a longer time leading to significant vapour loss could increase the concentration of dangerous ions especially the heavy metals if present and could make the resulting water unsafe to consume. Boiling is advisable for emergency situations and recommended to boil for very short times while minimizing significant vapour loss.

Also, if available one can acquire some unsophisticated kits for home use. These normally comes with some disposable strips for general and specific ions as well as combiner conductivity and TDS meter.

Is extremely pure water good for drinking?

While poor or bad quality water may be bad for drinking, so is extremely pure water. Extremely pure water has low or no ionic content and could be acidic. Good ionic content is required to balance the water acidity as well as present some essential ions for body's proper functioning. Acidic water may be bad for our bones, some internal organs and the general well being of your body. However, intermittent use of acidic water may be good to treat some infections in the body.

Could poor water be a silent killer?

Yes! Analogously, good engine oil prolongs an engine's life, so does good quality drinking water make you healthier with prolonged life. Poor water quality could make you sick and shorten your life span unknowingly. It could be contributory to some of our unexplained ill-health and death.

Also, it is important to note that some of our illnesses may originate from acid-base imbalance in the body. Therefore, it is recommended the body maintains an alkaline to acid ratio of about 4 to 1 i.e., 80% to 20%, respectively to develop strong resistance against diseases. A drop in this ratio to about 3 to 1 can put your health in danger. The body can function properly and maintain health only in the presence of enough alkaline reserves as well as the proper alkaline to acid ratio in all the body tissue and the blood. For optimum health and maximum disease resistance it is important that one's diet be slightly over alkaline. This can be aided by consuming quality water which has the required alkalinity to neutralize acidity in the body.

Though, food types categorized into acidic, alkaline, or neutral play a role; more alkaline will

be required to balance acid foods. Since 60% of the adult body on the average is water, alkalinity derived from water could be beneficial. On the contrary, too much alkalinity in the body above the proper ratio could be unsafe (Alkalosis). It appears that some untreated water, undertreated water and overtreated water e.g., distilled water and some Reverse Osmosis (RO) water without the added required ions could be unsafe for drinking, hence, proper measures need to be in place for people to drink the right quality water. To be safe, consume water from reliable sources- confirming reliability could involve checking the packaging label, calling the company to ask how the water is purified or treated and/or visiting the company, if possible, to witness their processes. In addition, educating yourself about water, food types (i.e., acidic, neutral, or alkaline) and associated health issues is necessary. Testing one's urine for acidity or alkalinity will be helpful to decide on water and food selection. The above is to provide some general information. While I cannot be very detailed here, your responses, questions and what you want to know will prompt another article or a follow up chat.

Some References

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- The Water in You: Water and the Human Body
<https://www.usgs.gov/special-topics/water-science-school/science/water-you-water-and-human-body>
- Secondary Drinking Water Standards: Guidance for Nuisance Chemicals
<https://www.epa.gov/sdwa/secondary-drinking-water-standards-guidance-nuisance-chemicals>
- Guidelines for Drinking Water Quality pg. 114 on Packaged Drinking Water
<https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/254637/9789241549950-eng.pdf>
- Alkaline Foods and Acid Foods – The 80-20 ratio!
<https://www.bodybuilding.com/fun/alkaline-foods-and-acid-foods-80-20-ratio.htm>
- Aesthetic Water Quality Problems
www.sedifilt.com/drinking_water/aesthetic_water_quality_problems.html





WOMEN OF AFRICA NETWORK

WOMEN OF AFRICA NETWORK – INTERNATIONAL WOMENS DAY CELEBRATION

By Audrey Biney and Caroline Obure

"Investing in women is smart economics, and investing in girls, catching them upstream, is even smarter economics." - Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala

Imagine a gender equal world, free of stereotypes, bias and discrimination. A world where diversity is synonymous with equity and inclusivity and difference is valued embraced and celebrated.

“Gender Equality Today for a sustainable tomorrow“

This was the theme for this year's International Women's Day which is celebrated globally on March 8, to mark the social, economic, cultural, and political achievements of women and a call to action for accelerating women's equality.

The International Women's Day is powered by the collective efforts of all, as such, APN – Women of Africa Network joined the world in the celebrations by organizing a two part thought

provoking program. The first activity involved posing a challenge to women across continent to respond to the question “What does Gender Equality Mean to you, and given an opportunity to effect change that will push the agenda of gender equality to boost trade, what would it be?” The responses were then submitted in the form of short one minute videos.

The response was so overwhelming that it formed the part two activity which was a webinar with a great line up of experts in their relevant field to talk about gender disparity and how we can bridge the gap to support and prepare women for Trade opportunities across the continent and internationally and finally, to discuss the responses from the videos.

Moderated by Ms.Esther Dokuwaa Afosuhene, the webinar was graced by Mrs. Elsie Addo Awadzi, the 2nd Deputy Governor of the Bank of Ghana, Dr. Ngozi Egbuna, Economist and Regional Trade and Payment Expert, Ms. Shiphra Chisha, a Development Expert and Social Entrepreneur President and Co-Founder of African Women in Business, Dr. Laurie-Ann Agama, the Deputy Assistant US Trade Representative on Economic affairs and Ms Marie-Clarisse Avore Bekale, AfCFTA Secretariat Directorate of

Dispute Settlement and Legal Affairs. We also acknowledge the contribution from Joyce Williams Esq. Information gathered from the videos revealed that continentally, there is more work to be done for ALL women to have equal access to; ownership of and control over land, property, productive assets and resources; enjoy economic autonomy or full ability to freely assert their independence and make their life and career choices; have equal and full opportunity to exercise their agency, voice, participation and leadership in decision making in all economic areas in public and private sectors, in their communities and their homes.

Some of the issues addressed in detail by the panel of experts were, why SMEs do not scale up, access to finance and the need for improving financial literacy; International trade opportunities and support; what the AfCFTA secretariat are doing for women and youth SMEs; Platforms available for trading and interactive information sharing.

Also discussed were the knowledge gaps that exist at customs borders and access to border regulations through agencies, the need for forums for women in Cross Border Trade (CBT), training and capacity building programs, the need for PAPSS sensitization; safe storage, clean water and many more challenges.

A very successful program it was and next week, we begin a series to unpack the discussion from the webinar. Look out for the recording which will be made available in due course.

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EVENTS IN INTRA-AFRICAN TRADE



of March, 12:30 GMT, join the 1st Quarter Edition of the #AIEforum 2022,

Themed: CELEBRATING THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN A FAST-EVOLVING AFRICA, Register Now @ www.aieforum.org This event is made possible, kind courtesy, All-Africa Students Union (AASU), BlueCrest University College, ADVANS MEDIA COMMUNICATIONS LTD, and AE Mediacom

African women have been called “a powerful untapped economic force” and will be absolutely integral in addressing the developmental challenges Africa faces. Join the AIEforum on our year-long quiet to celebrate the never-ending role women have played in the development of Africa. On the 25th