

EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT

AFCFTA NEWS



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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR APN WOMEN OF AFRICA NETWORK

EDITORIAL

After a long hiatus, it really is great to be back – to a new month and new vistas ahead.

Like a boat on the ocean, the passage will inevitably be rough at times, but APN is certainly poised to weather all storms, especially now it has moved into a new office that will allow her to redefine and enhance its work dynamic. The middle of the year is an opportunity for renewal and strength; and APN has packed reserves of this - ready for the next level!

*Happy reading,
EK*

EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT

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APN GROUP



SECRETARY-GENERAL OF AFCFTA SECRETARIAT MEETS APN GROUP DELEGATION



A delegation of APN Group, led by Executive Director Louis Yaw Afful, met in a follow-up meeting with AFCFTA Secretariat head Wamkele Mene earlier this week.

Areas of discussion centered on an MOU to jointly-organize APN's "Africa Globalized Investment Summit", which maiden edition was held in Accra in 2021. This year, the summit will be hosted by the Seychelles Investment Board with partnership from AFCFTA Secretariat. Wamkele Mene commended APN for leading in advocacy and sensitization on AFCFTA among the private sector and CSOs in Africa.

The meeting also disclosed the closing of a deal between AFCFTA Secretariat with the Africa Development Bank (AfDB) to run an internship prog at masters level.

Only Mr. Afful, from APN top management, was present to lead the delegation that comprised Mr Afful himself; Executive Director of Women of Africa Network, Mrs. Audrey Biney; and a member of APN Kwesi Okyere-Boateng.

In February 2021, top management of APN, comprising Mr Afful; Deputy Executive Director E K Bensah; and Board Chair, Mr Tackie, first met AFCFTA Secretariat S-G Wamkele Mene for a maiden discussion and familiarisation of APN programmes and activities.



TWEETS (APN NEWSLETTER)



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WOMEN-LED INDUSTRY ASSOCIATIONS - FIGHTING THE CHALLENGE FOR DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA TOGETHER



*"The future is now! Never has there been a time where the odds are for women in Africa."
~Shiphra Chisa~*

The African continent is home to some of the world's fastest growing economies and offers an exciting frontier for businesses looking for growth and new markets, yet, persistent gender inequality is limiting its potential. In as much as patches of good news exist, they tend to be success stories for women at the top of the pyramid, and not for millions of ordinary African women in Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). Gender equality for African women is the key to fostering economic development through opportunities that will be presented by the AfCFTA. Statistics indicate that if Africa steps up its efforts now to close gender gaps, it can secure a substantial growth dividend in the process. Accelerating progress toward equality could boost African economies by the equivalent of 10 percent of their collective GDP by 2025.

Pre- Covid 19, progress had been made towards boosting the gender parity gap in trade however, Statistics on the scourge of gender-based violence during the pandemic both alarming and a constant reminder of the devastating effects of COVID 19 and its far-reaching economic and psychological consequences that will take years to reverse. All is not lost though. It is evident that if the millions of women in Businesses are supported with the right financial and technological tools to trade locally and across borders, thereby scaling

up their enterprises the economy will be restored and more.

The private sector in Africa exhibits a dual structure on one hand; there are modern and large capital, import-intensive enterprises, and micro, small and medium enterprises serving local markets with simple and traditional technologies on the other end of the spectrum. It is also evident that majority of MSMEs cannot fulfil their potential role because of the various bottleneck factors, which include and not limited to resource endowments, economies of scale, demand conditions, market size, as well as availability of technology and suitable institutions.

Through the formation of Industry associations, MSMEs can address these problems related to their size and improve their competitive position. It is also recognized that Industry Associations represent an increasingly important form of participatory development in Africa countries therefore can make a major contribution to the improvement of the environment MSMEs operate in by serving as a vehicle for the expression of their views, taking collective action, delivering core services, and networking among members and other stakeholders.

One of such is the African Women in Business (AWiB) which is a Pan-African organisation representing the interests of women entrepreneurs across industries, assisting them with access to trade and

investments and disseminating information on the benefits from the implementation of the AfCFTA. African Women In Business (African-WiB) exists to propel women entrepreneurs into economic, social and political spheres of power worldwide by Strengthening the wealth creating capacity of its members and promoting economic development within the entrepreneurial community, creating innovative and effective change in the business culture, building strategic alliances, coalitions and affiliations, transforming public policy and influencing opinion makers.

AWiB also has an advocacy role of raising awareness among stakeholders and mobilizing key players in the field of AWiB promotion by conducting studies that assess the constraints and conditions for creating an enabling environment and promoting women entrepreneurial development in Africa in order to develop new and innovative approaches.

In order to ensure that business support services provision is effective, appropriate and accessible to women entrepreneurs who want to either start or grow a business, AWiB provides business support by strengthening the institutional and technical capacity of the national businesswomen associations or institutions that support the emergence and growth of women-owned MSMEs, improve access to national, regional and international business networks by Women-owned SMEs and enhance ICT use and promotion of effective on-line business support and management tools provision.

Since its inception, AWiB has provided skills in three critical areas, ICT , Trade and formal qualification and the soon to kick off the Export Trade Training that will see 143 women not only trained but gaining access to the UK Market in selected sectors. They have also provided access to the Mentee

platform "TWAA" which connects with peers and mentors, building communities and networks, sharing insights, learning and accessing personal and professional development tools.

If implemented effectively, TWAA will unshackle the potential of hundreds of millions of women who hitherto could not trade beyond their neighbourhoods, or at best city-centres in their respective countries. For instance, With the right training, affordable access to a myriad of technological tools, and improved ease of doing business across borders, Awusi from Kumasi, Ghana will be able to sell her consignment of brilliantly designed kente dresses to Thokozile in Durban South Africa, Ancha from Mozambique will be able to connect with, and sell tons of shrimp and other seafood products to buyers across the continent at the click of a button. Furthermore, financial platforms like eCOBbA Africa, a financial trading platform built to support savings and investment groups allowing women to access funds, e-wallets and loans via the Digital Banking Platform, have revolutionised trade within industry associations by digitizing the village community savings and lending process.

AWiB has also invested in aquaculture in Mauritiana, Agriculture on medicinal

cannabis in Lesotho and ICT in South Africa and provided opportunities for women to form part of the seafood distribution channel as distributors with the international business network. This has enabled them to drop ship and distribute products across geographies within a coordinated partner framework.

The time is now for African women to rise and take their place in the broader private sector, to transform their Spazas and donkey-pulling carts into formidable businesses that can compete favourably, bring meaningful income, and contribute positively to the broader economy thereby reducing the gender digital divide. These are just

but a few benefits that could be amplified and exploited with the implementation of the AfCFTA. The role of Industry associations in Economic empowerment and development can therefore not be downplayed for it is said, "If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together" – African proverb

Ms. Shiphra Chisa is the President of African Women in Business (AWiB)

EVENTS IN INTRA-AFRICAN TRADE



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15-17 JULY 2022
WORLD TRADE CENTRE KUALA LUMPUR

AFRICA EXPO 2022
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia



APN AfCFTA Policy Network

sib Seychelles Investment Board

AFRICA GLOBALIZED INVESTMENT

HAND IN HAND WITH AFRICA

INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES UNDER THE AFRICAN CONTINENTAL FREE TRADE AREA

NOV 8TH-10TH, 2022

(APN) AND SEYCHELLES INVESTMENT BOARD IN PARTNERSHIP WITH AFCFTA SECRETARIAT AND OTHER PARTNERS PRESENTS 2022 AFRICA GLOBALIZED INVESTMENT SUMMIT IN SEYCHELLES.

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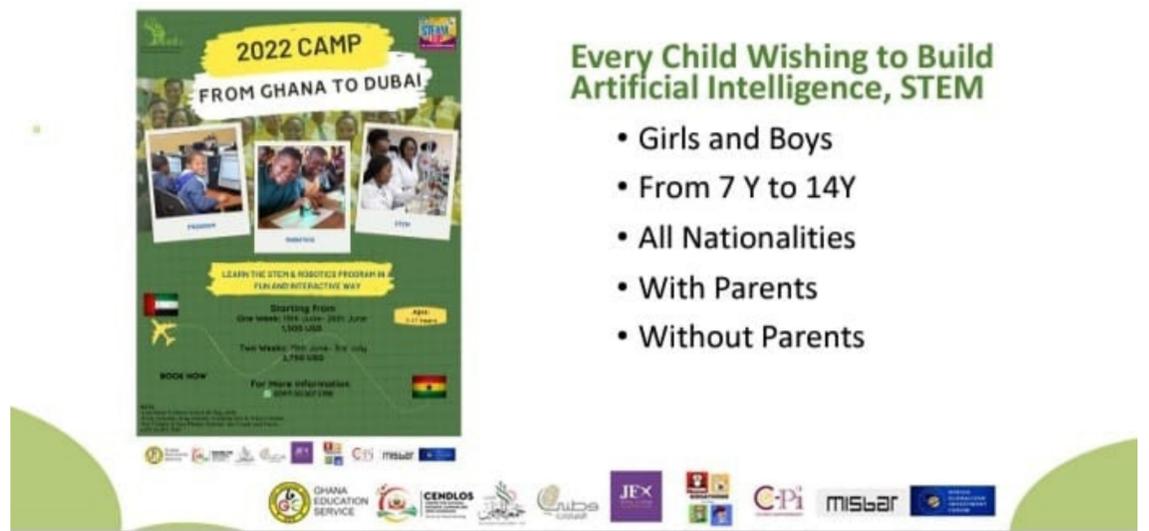
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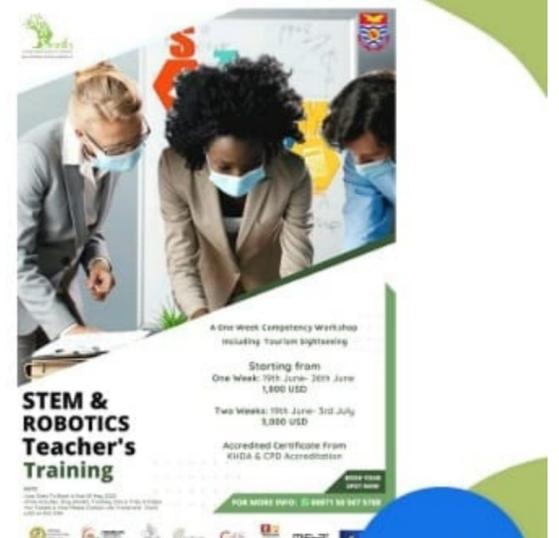
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