THE ROLE OF THE AFRICAN CONTINENTAL FREE TRADE AREA (AfCFTA) IN ECONOMIC GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

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WTO - Internal

Presentation outline

I. History

II. Objectives

III. Benefits

IV. Action taken in Togo

V. Conclusion

History: some dates

- **January 2012:** Decision by the Heads of State and Government of the African Union (AU) to begin negotiations on the AfCFTA
- **June 2015:** Launch of negotiations on the AfCFTA
- **21 March 2018:** Signing of the Agreement in Kigali
- **30 May 2019:** Entry into force of the Agreement
- **7 July 2019:** Launch of the AfCFTA
- **1 January 2021:** Start of trading

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Objectives

- Create a single market for goods and services
- Lay the foundation for the establishment of a Continental Customs Union
- Enhance the competitiveness of the economies of the States Parties

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Benefits of the AfCFTA

- Increase in the volume of intra-African trade
- An African economy that is less dependent on the outside world
- Poverty reduction and economic growth
- Creation of jobs for women and young people

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Action taken by Togo

- **Ratification of the Agreement**

- 16 December 2018: Adoption by the Togolese Parliament of a draft law authorizing the Head of State to ratify the Agreement

- 2 April 2019: Deposit of the Agreement's instrument of ratification with the African Union

Strong political will
Audience of the Head of State with the AfCFTA Secretary-General in Lomé, Togo



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Outreach sessions in the capital and the country's interior

Target audience:

- Public sector
- Private sector
- Civil society
- Parliamentarians
- Academics
- Journalists

Objective: ensure all actors get to grips with the content of the Agreement and understand what the AfCFTA entails

- **Training sessions** on the procedures and conditions to which goods are subject in order to be eligible for AfCFTA preferential treatment, with technical and financial support from the Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF), the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

Target audience:

- Customs officers
- Freight forwarders
- Women in charge of processing units
- Women traders and entrepreneurs

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❖ National consultations

Target audience: Women economic operators

Objective: Gather the concerns of women in Togo engaged in cross-border trade, as part of the preparation of the AfCFTA Protocol on women in trade

Following these national consultations, the women made recommendations that are to be implemented (female capacity building, stakeholder communication and awareness-raising, advocacy for the elimination of potential obstacles to trade)

National consultation of women



Consultation of women









National consultation of women (continued)



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- **Preparation of a national AfCFTA strategy accompanied by a matrix of actions**

Preparation and validation: October 2019 - Still with technical and financial support from the EIF, ECA and UNDP

Objective: The strategy is based on the country's strengths and weaknesses, and seeks to strengthen the institutional mechanisms that would ensure a successful implementation of the AfCFTA Agreement, with a view to taking full advantage of the continental market

- **National AfCFTA Committee**

Creation, within the National Committee for International Trade Negotiations (CNCI), of a National AfCFTA Sub-Committee responsible for the implementation of the AfCFTA Agreement at the national level

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- Preparation of the schedule of tariff concessions (submitted to ECOWAS)
- Preparation of a draft schedule of specific commitments in the five priority sectors for trade in services
- Validation of the mapping of Togo's non-tariff measures (NTMs)
- Awareness-raising on the online non-tariff barrier mechanism

Other steps to be taken

- Establish the AfCFTA Sub-Committee as a technical committee pursuant to the 2022 decree establishing the National Committee for the Management of Trade Agreements (CNAC)

- Update the national strategy for the implementation of the AfCFTA, taking into account the governmental roadmap 2025

- Implementation of the recommendations arising from the national consultation of women (document available)

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SUPPORT FROM TECHNICAL AND FINANCIAL PARTNERS (TFPs)

- **Solicitation** of TFPs for the implementation of the matrix of actions of the national AfCFTA strategy, which includes:
- ✓ Preparation of a policy to promote the exportation of products and services, taking into account African and international standards and regulations
- ✓ Preparation of a strategy for breaking into export markets for various products and services
- ✓ Technical capacity building for producers and processors
- ✓ Capacity building for laboratories responsible for the quality control of agricultural products
- Enhancing understanding of the AfCFTA Agreement
- Trade prospection in African countries

SUPPORT FROM TFPs (CONTINUED)

- Support for the intensification of the organization of national, regional and international trade fairs. The participation of women in international trade fairs should be subsidized.
- Interconnect banks from various countries and minimize transaction fees so that women do not have to transport cash, thereby preventing them from being targeted by robbers
- Raise awareness among and train women traders and entrepreneurs on the use of the "50 Million African Women Speak" platform

Conclusion

- Togo is a State Party to the AfCFTA Agreement
- Togo is one of the first countries to prepare its national AfCFTA strategy
- It has also put in place a team that takes part in negotiations as part of this free trade area

This team is made up of negotiators and experts on the various AfCFTA-related matters

- **The Director-General of Trade (DGC) and the Director of Foreign Trade (DCE) are the AfCFTA contact points for Togo**
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Thank you for your attention

