



United Nations
Economic Commission for Africa



Gender and the AfCFTA

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United Nations Economic
Commission for Africa (ECA)**



Role of the AfCFTA in Women's Economic Empowerment

- **Agreement recognises the importance of gender equality** and improving export capacity of informal suppliers, MSMEs, women/youth
- **Projected increases in exports of female-dominated sectors** in manufacturing and agriculture and value addition along value chains
- **Projected increases intra-African exports** in labour-intensive industries, low-skilled wages
- **Strengthening regional value chains, customs cooperation, trade facilitation**
- **Mechanisms to address non-tariff barriers**



Relationship between Trade and Gender

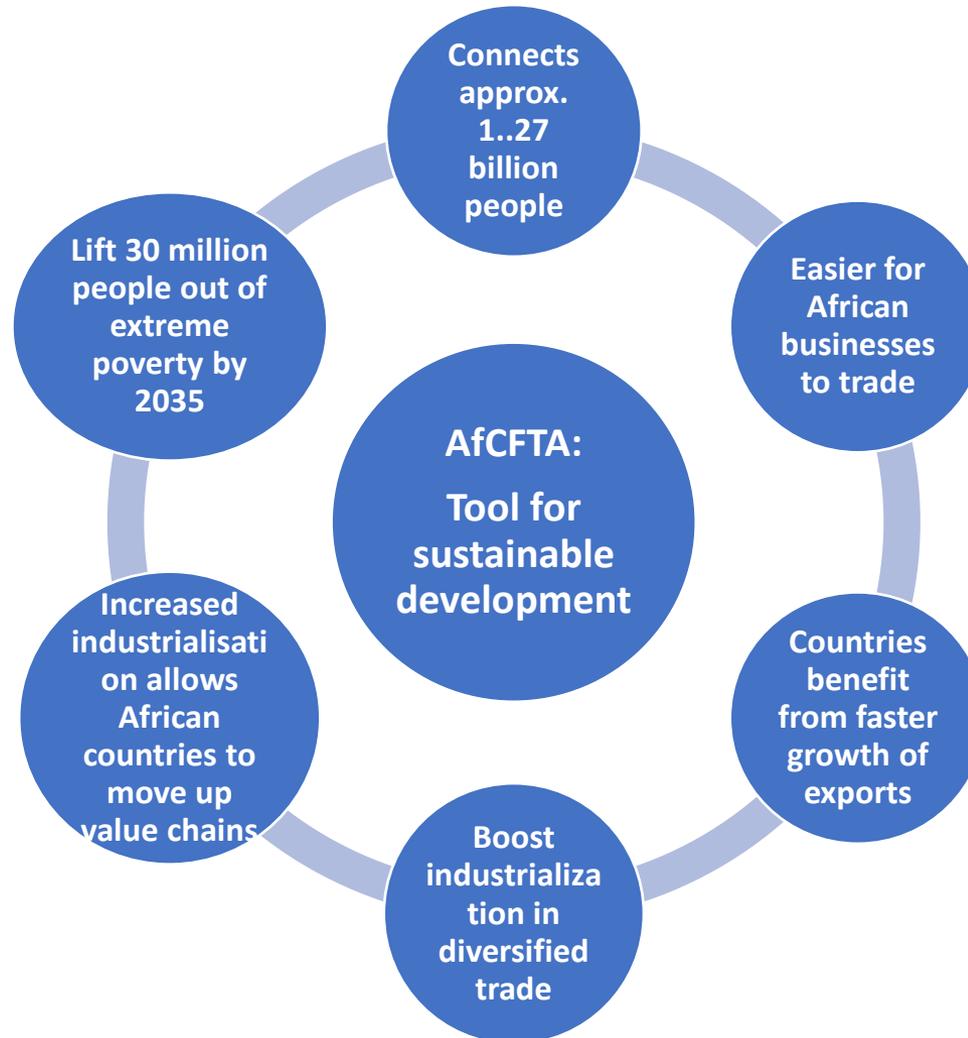
- Importance of participation of women in trade
- Distributional effects of trade
- Various roles of women in trade
- Gender and youth inequalities lead to reduced output and inefficiencies

Access to assets, finance, markets, information, networks, skills, standards, technology



ECA Africa Renewal Magazine, 2014

AfCFTA as a tool for sustainable development

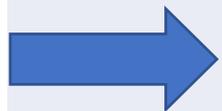


Towards inclusive AfCFTA implementation

The AfCFTA can accelerate the economic empowerment of women as a fundamental component of gender equality



Spur larger wage gains for women



Boost wages for unskilled more than skilled workers, helping to close the gender wage gap

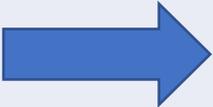


Promotes economic empowerment opportunities and entrepreneurship for women-owned SMEs and in female-dominated sectors



Businesses benefit from economies of scale access to larger population

Gender-related considerations in the AfCFTA Agreement

	Preamble of the Agreement contains explicit reference to the importance of gender equality for the development of international trade and economic cooperation
	Article 3 (e) emphasizes the need to promote and attain sustainable and inclusive socio-economic development, gender equality and structural transformation of the State Parties, as one of the general objectives of the AfCFTA
	Article 27 (2) (d) of the AfCFTA Protocol on Trade in Services refers to improving the export capacity of formal and informal service suppliers, with particular attention to micro, small and medium-sized operators and <i>women and youth service suppliers</i> .

Leveraging the AfCFTA for the creation of equal opportunities

AfCFTA Agreement Trade Facilitation Reforms

- Women's roles as small-scale traders, entrepreneurs, producers, workers
- Make it easier for women to trade, address NTBs, reduce costs of businesses, and incentivise formalisation
- Encouraging the creation of Simplified Trade Regimes

AfCFTA Online Portal for Non-Tariff Barrier Monitoring, Reporting and Elimination, created under Annex 5 of the Protocol on Trade in Goods

- [Tradebarriers.africa](https://tradebarriers.africa) platform operates as a NTB reporting mechanism tool

The image shows a screenshot of the AfCFTA Non-Tariff Barriers Reporting, Monitoring and Eliminating Mechanism website. The header includes the AfCFTA logo and the text "African Continental Free Trade Area" and "Non-Tariff Barriers Reporting, Monitoring and Eliminating Mechanism". Below the header is a navigation menu with links for Home, About, Complaints, Documents, Webinars, Links, and Contacts. There is also a language selector and a login/register button. The main content area features three service buttons: "Report an NTB online", "Report an NTB via mobile" (with a "COMING SOON" banner), and "FAQs".

Leveraging provisions in the AfCFTA Agreement

- **Customs cooperation and trade facilitation and transit provisions**
 - Provisions simplify and harmonize customs and border procedures
 - Benefits women entrepreneurs and informal cross-border traders
- **Technical barriers to trade; sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) measures**
 - Makes it easier for small-scale traders and smallholder farmers to meet export standards and satisfy regulatory requirements
- **Sensitive products and exclusion list provisions**
 - Enables countries to exclude specific products and sectors that are critical for food security, employ a high number of women, and are considered essential for women's needs

Technical assistance, capacity building, and training

- **Obstacles for women**
 - Disproportionately affected by regulatory, procedural barriers
 - Costs of complying with technical or sanitary standards
 - Obtaining certificates of origin and other trade documentation
- **Technical assistance**
 - Can help to build technical expertise, skills and trading capacity of women traders and entrepreneurs in various areas
 - Will empower them to take advantage of new export opportunities arising from AfCFTA implementation
- **Training and capacity building for trade participation**

Advancing a gender-sensitive approach to AfCFTA implementation

- Cannot assume gains from AfCFTA implementation will be equitably distributed
- Implementation through national and regional strategies
- ***Gender mainstreaming: strategy for making the concerns and experiences of women and men an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes so that women and men benefit equally, with the ultimate goal of gender equality***
- Gender-responsive policies & complementary measures to enhance women's capacity to leverage opportunities
- Training and capacity building for women's associations

Advancing a gender-sensitive approach to AfCFTA implementation through gender mainstreaming in AfCFTA National Strategies

Gender mainstreaming entails

- Understanding how women contribute to and participate in trade in their different roles, as workers, small-scale traders and entrepreneurs (formal and informal) and producers
- Examining the gender dimension and impact of issues- specifically as they relate to production and trade, AfCFTA market opportunities and export performance
- Examining potential AfCFTA-related risks as well as gender-specific constraints for women who tend to be disproportionately affected by trade barriers and inequalities
- Identifying complementary measures that can address trade obstacles for women to leverage new opportunities and move to higher skilled work through the AfCFTA

Strategies for inclusive AfCFTA implementation

- **Mainstream gender** considerations in national AfCFTA implementation strategies
- **Engage stakeholders** in inclusive national AfCFTA implementation
- Provide **training and capacity building for women's organisations** on how to leverage benefits of trade agreements & advocate for inclusive trade policies
- Build **linkages** between larger and smaller players
- Seek **opportunities for women's participation** in production of high-value commodities and products for African markets
- **Encourage women's participation** and gender considerations in decision-making and negotiations
- **Identify gender dimension** of Phase 2 and 3 issues in negotiations

Informality: Opportunities & Innovations

- **Up to 70% of women** work in informal trade
- Informal economy represents up to **75% of the economic activity of women**
- **Regional policies during border disruptions**
- **Private sector innovations** – aggregation of goods by women in ICBT during COVID-19
- **Trade facilitation** – one-stop border posts, single windows, simplified trade regimes
- **Digital solutions** – digital divide
- **Export Processing Zones**
- **Formal measurement of ICBT**

Aflao-Kodjoviakope closure
along Ghana-Togo border



Photo taken by ECA enumerator on 18 April 2020

ICBT Statistics: National & Regional Capacities

- **Sex-disaggregated data** is critical for evidence-based policy responses
- **Challenge:** Availability of and capacity to collect and use gender statistics, particularly on informal trade
- **Opportunities:**



Assessing capacity to mainstream gender



Developing national capacities for data and statistics



Measuring contributions to and participation of women in trade



Knowledge generation, production, dissemination, and partnerships

Suggestions for covering women's participation in AfCFTA

- Understand how the agreement is supporting gender equality and women's economic empowerment
- Connect with key stakeholders: women's business associations and cross-border trade associations
- Document successful examples of women traders, entrepreneurs, their goods/services trading under AfCFTA
- Understand how women entrepreneurs are able to grow their businesses as a result of the AfCFTA through an expanded customer base and investments
- Investigate changes for cross-border traders
- Highlight innovations by women entrepreneurs to take advantage of the AfCFTA, including in e-commerce, mentorship, and solutions to address digital divide
- Share stories of successful training and capacity building
- Promote inclusive national and regional policy changes