REGIONAL BUREAU
FOR AFRICA

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Trade, Not Aid – A revitalized partnership towards integration for sustainable development in Africa

A word from the Director

Through the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA), Africa is voting for trade as a means for implementing the SDGs. The COVID-19 pandemic has accentuated the urgency in keeping trade open, and in producing those goods and services for the #OneAfricanMarket. Doing this will trigger a #MadeinAfrica revolution – changing destinies – and edifying a choice of trade, not aid, as the gateway to Africa's socioeconomic prosperity. In this issue of the RBA Digest, we spotlight trade – from local communities digitizing their operations to expand reach, to youth claiming the AfCFTA, to women setting new best practices in how to create good trade deals. To better support women, UNDP has developed a **new partnership with the International Trade Centre (ITC)** focusing on small businesses, women and young entrepreneurs. The world's largest free-trade area is taking shape – and we must all work together to ensure its promise becomes a reality.

Ahunna Eziakonwa

Spotlight: the AfCFTA Fireside Chats

The collective message from Africa's young people is clear: they are actors - not spectators in turning the magic of the #OneAfricanMarket into reality - a task they have already taken on with full force. In the first of a series of UNDP Africa's new "AfCFTA Fireside Chats", together with YouLead, we hosted a solutions–oriented conversation on increased Pan-African trading opportunities for youth in agricultural food production, digitally–enabled agriculture services, media, government advisory, talent recruitment, and more...

Read the summary.... | Watch the recording...

From the ground up – Africa's women decide how trade deals affecting them should be designed

Success of the AfCFTA will be measured by how far it prioritizes womenowned exporting enterprises. In a first of its kind in trade – deals formation, the AfCFTA Protocol on Women in Trade will be shaped by women. These voices from the ground are being consulted, through a partnership of UNWomen, AfCFTA Secretariat and UNDP, on how their unique challenges can be unlocked through a Protocol. The bottom-up approach is offering a minefield of best practices in how to boost export capacity in agriculture, industry, and the services sectors, for women. The results will be collated into a Regional Report to be presented at the upcoming High-Level Women in Trade Conference taking place in Accra, Ghana.

Voice your opinion... | Read more about the consultations... | Photos... | Read about women and trade in Burkina Faso...

Business unusual – Gambians innovate to be pandemic-proof

When faced with pandemic closures and the need to re-open safely, Gambian marketplaces worked with AccLabGM to create a digital marketplace for traders and buyers, through the MyLumo App. Learn more...

Inclusivity and the AfCFTA – the view from borderland communities

If the 270-million strong inhabitants of the borderlands are supported, they can be prepositioned to take more than a slice of the pie of the projected US$3 trillion investments in climate resilience and low-carbon infrastructure in Africa by 2030, with the development of environmentally sustainable agro-pastoralism and trading practice. Be inspired...

UNDP and Afrilabs – a new model in innovation for trade

UNDP's partnership with AfriLabs has offered intensive boot-camp training to 360 entrepreneurs from 120 small businesses. Through its flagship "Home Grown Solutions Accelerator Initiative" (HGS), AUDA-NEPAD, in collaboration with JICA with support of the Boston Consulting Group, is also working to strengthen Africa's micro, SMEs for increased pandemic resilience in the health sector. Read more...