

REGIONAL PROGRAMME FOR AFRICA

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## Women traders are poised to transform economies through intra-African trade

Fatoumata Njie, Herbal Tea Producer in The Gambia and participant at the ECOWAS-UNDP workshop on the AfCFTA



# EDITORIAL Note

“It is time to do development differently. In our actions in Africa, we need to break silos and cross borders. Our ‘NextGen’ approach also calls for us to accompany Africa beyond aid and towards becoming a leader in the 4th Industrial Revolution.”

- Ahunna Eziakonwa,  
Regional Director for Africa,  
UNDP

Boosting intra-Africa trade is indispensable for structural economic transformation on the continent. This month’s highlight is UNDP’s support to this vision through its partnership with the AfCFTA Secretariat and Regional Economic Communities/Regional Mechanisms (RECs/RMs). In April, we worked in close partnership with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and other partners to roll out **a series of capacity building programmes targeting small traders and trade promotion agencies in the ECOWAS region**. The workshops aimed to provide participants with training packages on the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), promote peer learning and cross-regional dialogues, and facilitate free access to e-learning materials on standards/certification, packaging, logistics and trade finance. RECs in East and Southern Africa have since expressed interest in collaborating with UNDP to organize similar workshops for traders and producers in their regions.

The ambition of our regional programming must surpass Africa’s prevailing development challenges to achieve the desired results. This is the principle behind the **formulation and design of our new #NextGen Regional Programme Document (RPD)**. As guided by the Regional Bureau for Africa (RBA) Director, the new RPD will be an incubator for Africa’s growth and will place emphasis on scale and impact. It will also build on the current visioning and development of the new UNDP Strategic Plan (2022-25) and RBA’s Renewed Strategic Offer in Africa as springboards for bolder and more imaginative investments that can also harness resources from within the continent.

Inclusive participation and firm ownership by diverse stakeholders are the core principles that will underpin and reinforce the development of both the new RPD and new Strategic Plan. Last week, **RBA renewed its partnership with the new African Union (AU) leadership elected in February**. A meeting between RBA Director Ms. Ahunna Eziakonwa and Ambassador Bankole Adeoye, AU Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security, discussed potential areas for collaboration on governance and conflict prevention that would translate mutually identified priorities into concrete action at both regional and country levels.

# MONTHLY Highlights

## Women traders are poised to transform economies through intra-African trade

**APRIL:** Women and youth have the potential to drive the transformation of Africa's economies and must be mainstreamed into national and continental frameworks in order to guarantee and fully harness the benefits of the AfCFTA. The ECOWAS-UNDP workshop series, 'Maximizing the AfCFTA for SMEs, Traders and Trade Associations', commenced with a training of trainers in Freetown, Sierra Leone, followed by two workshops in Accra, Ghana and Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, for traders and officials from the English, French and Portuguese-speaking member states of ECOWAS.

More than 100 participants from all 15 ECOWAS member states took part in the three workshops, including traders and producers in agriculture/agro-processing, textile/fashion and other value chains, as well as representatives of trade promotion agencies and customs.

Limited access to finance, poor infrastructure and excessive fees were listed as major obstacles to growing and operating their businesses. The participants identified practical and concrete next steps for governments, businesses and trade associations in order to take advantage of market opportunities within the AfCFTA framework.



### Accra, Ghana

- ▶ Press release (EN)
- ▶ Press release (FR)
- ▶ Photos

### Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire

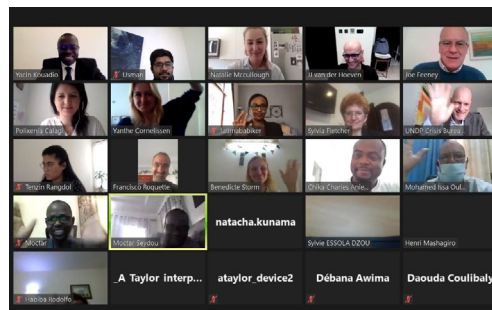
- ▶ Press release (EN)
- ▶ Press release (FR)
- ▶ Photos



## Africa Regional Dialogue - Innovation, the Informal Economy and the One Africa Market

**26 APRIL:** As part of the 2021 Istanbul Innovation Days, UNDP's Regional Bureau for Africa (RBA) organized a High-Level Africa Regional Dialogue on 'Innovation, the Informal Economy and the One Africa Market: Stitching the Tapestry for Sustainable Development'.

UNDP Administrator Achim Steiner and the RBA Director, Ahunna Eziakonwa, engaged key personalities such as the Secretary-General of the AfCFTA, Ghana's Minister of Communications and high-end innovators to shift mindsets on innovation in Africa. They explored interfaces between innovation, the informal economy, the new One Africa Market and solutions to key issues faced by African innovators to step up faster for a green and sustainable path beyond recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.



## RBA partners with the Crisis Bureau to launch the Stabilization Academy

**21 APRIL:** In partnership with the German Foreign Affairs Office and with the support of leading voices in the field, UNDP's Crisis Bureau and RBA partnered to launch the Stabilization Academy. The Stabilization Academy aims to serve UNDP with expertise, knowledge, innovation, networking and staff deployment in the area of stabilization. The first nine-week training started on 21 April with participants from UNDP Country Offices in the Sahel region.

As the newest branch of UNDP's SURGE Academy, the Stabilization Academy will provide state-of-the-art continuous adult learning, exchange and networking to foster the next generation of crisis staff from within UNDP's cadres.



## Webinar on Sustainable Energy, Climate Adaptation and Poverty in Africa

**15 APRIL:** UNDP Africa's Strategy, Analysis and Research Team organized a debate on Sustainable Energy, Climate Adaptation and Poverty in Africa.

W. Gyude Moore and Vijaya Ramachandran, researchers at the Washington DC-based Center for Global Development, discussed with Maxwell Gomera, UNDP's Resident Representative in Rwanda, the impact the global initiative to impose a ban on fossil fuel subsidies would have on the economy of African countries and alternate solutions.



### Building mediation capacities at regional, national and local levels

**20-29 APRIL:** In cooperation with ICGLR, UNDP, GIZ and the EU, Clingendael Academy developed a 5-day online course on Insider Mediation for Disarmament, Demobilization, Repatriation, Resettlement and Reintegration (DDR/RR).

The course also benefitted from the partnership with the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary General for the Great Lakes and DPO.

Participants engaged in live lectures, interactive workshops, group assignments and online digital tools to shape and strengthen Insider Mediator capacities to support DDR/RR processes at regional, national and local levels.



### Partnering on youth empowerment initiatives in the Sahel

**APRIL:** UNDP's West and Central Africa Hub and the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel (UNISS) met with the Minister of Employment, Youth and Sports in Mauritania, H.E. Dr. Taleb Ould Sid'Ahmed, to discuss the launch of the YouthConnekt Mauritania programme, the National Volunteerism Programme (Watanouna) and other youth empowerment initiatives in line with the UNDP Youth Offer for the Sahel.

Discussions were also held with the G5 Sahel Secretariat and focused on opportunities for collaboration on youth employment, entrepreneurship and engagement initiatives in the G5 Sahel member states. UNDP and G5 Sahel agreed to develop a shared integrated workplan on youth empowerment in the sub-region, which will be aligned to both organizations' priorities and focus areas.



### Cross-border interventions key to addressing development issues in the Lake Chad Basin

**7-8 APRIL:** Local communities living around the Lake Chad Basin have a long history of trade and cultural exchanges. Regional actors, including governments, should therefore deploy the necessary efforts to support initiatives aimed at bringing communities together.

A workshop organized by the Secretariat of the Lake Chad Basin Regional Stabilization Strategy (RSS) gathered various stakeholders to identify priority cross-border interventions in line with the implementation of the RSS.

33 participants, including governors' representatives from Boko Haram-affected territories, Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) officers, Territorial Action Plan (TAP) consultants, Lake Chad Basin Commission and African Union representatives, and other resource persons took part in the workshop, emerging with concrete proposals for cross-border interventions as part of the broader humanitarian-development-peace nexus.



## development dialogues

### Rethinking solutions to crisis in the decade of action

**21 APRIL:** During the ‘UNDP Development Dialogues’ event, organized jointly with the permanent Missions of Norway and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan to the United Nations, UNDP presented newly published guidance on the use of Behavioural Science for PVE programming titled ‘Applying Behavioural Science to Support the Prevention of Violent Extremism: Experiences and Lessons Learned’.

This guidance was developed based on the lessons learned in using BI in PVE programming in Sudan, Yemen, Tajikistan, Pakistan and Uzbekistan. The regional PVE project held consultations with both the RBAS Innovation team and the HQ PVE team on the follow-up steps for further dissemination and practical sessions with UNDP PVE-practitioners in Africa through the Community of Practice (CoP).

- ▶ Webinar recording



### Crafting a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship for youth in Africa

**7-8 APRIL:** UNDP co-organized the 10th Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Youth Forum, an annual initiative and a critical platform where young people can amplify their voices, contribute to policy discussions and make concrete recommendations to the United Nations through their stories, solutions and innovations at a global level.

“To ensure that all young people have the opportunity to achieve the SDGs, we need to localize the SDGs and make sure the needs of communities are heard and addressed,” said Angela Muruli, a UN Volunteer working with UN Women in Nigeria.

- ▶ Webinar recording
- ▶ Article



### Cross-border trade as a driver of peace in the Liptako-Gourma region

**28 APRIL:** Borderland communities in Africa face a triple threat from COVID-19, protracted conflict and disasters related to climate change. The impact of COVID-19 has been particularly pronounced in the Liptako-Gourma region (Niger, Mali and Burkina Faso).

In response to these threats, the UNDP Africa Borderlands Centre launched the sub-regional and cross-border “Trade for Peace” project to build resilience, facilitate socio-economic recovery and strengthen peacebuilding and social cohesion among other objectives.

The Japanese Supplementary Budget funded project will be implemented by UNDP Country Offices in Niger, Mali and Burkina Faso, UNDP’s Sahel Unit in Dakar, and UNDP’s Africa Borderlands Centre.

- ▶ Article



### Gender mainstreaming and inclusion in small arms and light weapons

**12 APRIL:** 52 participants attended a Women’s Forum on Gender Mainstreaming in Small Arms, Light Weapons and Security Control in Freetown, Sierra Leone. Representing civil society, government and security forces, the attendees developed an action plan to support gender inclusion in SALW and security control.

The project also conducted a verification exercise of the survey findings on local gun manufacturers – based on a study conducted by the NATCOM in June 2020. Out of the 550 respondents, 253 admitted to being involved in local artisanal arms manufacturing. The findings revealed the need for more sensitization on the dangers of illicit possession, use and manufacturing of local weapons and to establish more collaboration between the communities and security sectors in border areas.



### YouthConnekt Alumni: Luke Muleka

UNDP created the YouthConnekt Africa Action Awards to honour outstanding achievements by young African innovators. This month, we recognize 2019 YouthConnekt award winner **Luke Muleka**, the CEO and Founder of Signs Media Kenya Ltd, a social enterprise promoting social, economic, political, and talent development for persons with disabilities (PWD).

The Award recognizes innovation in the areas of economic development, social inclusion, environmental protection and digital inclusion.

Since 2018, UNDP has presented the Award, which includes prize money and training, to 18 distinguished young leaders.



### Sahel Resilience Project holds first Board Meeting with stakeholders

**31 MARCH:** Co-chaired by UNDP, the AU and ECOWAS, the meeting convened 44 participants from various organizations and member states. The Project Board formally endorsed the annual work plan for 2021, the project governance and risk mitigation arrangements, the communication and advocacy strategy for 2021, and priorities for 2021.

The Board also reflected on the regional and national response to the COVID-19 pandemic and discussed the way forward to foster disaster risk reduction and risk-informed development in the Western Sahel, a region facing rapid population growth and chronic humanitarian crises due to climate change impact, food insecurity, epidemics and conflict

## Nature, Climate and Energy: UNDP Ecosystems and Diversity



**Women Fighting Wildlife Crime:**  
Celebrating women around the world who are leading the charge to protect local wildlife



Article



**Turning the Tide:** How shipping companies are accelerating action against wildlife trafficking



Article



**Farming for Life:** How climate action in the Seychelles is improving access to water and protecting against flooding



Article

UNDP's Nature, Climate Change and Energy (NCE) Team promotes and scales up **integrated whole-of-governance approaches and nature-based solutions** that reduce poverty and inequalities, strengthen livelihoods and inclusive growth, mitigate conflict, forced migration and displacement, and promote more resilient governance systems that advance linked peace and security agendas.



# KNOWLEDGE Products

The Regional Programme aims to make research findings **accessible, relevant and accurate** in how they reflect the conditions affecting vulnerable and marginalized groups across the continent.

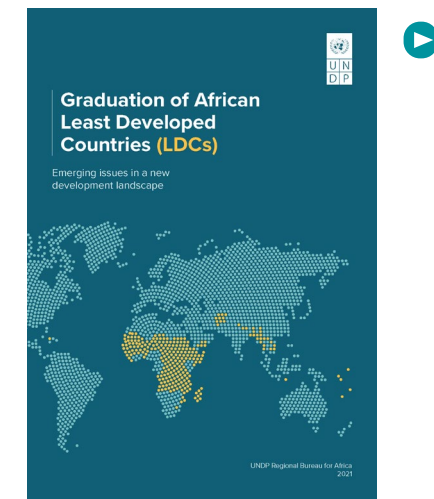
## Private Sector



## Nature, Climate and Energy



## Strategic Analysis and Research Team (SART)



## PVE Quarterly Newsletter



## Call for Papers: African Economic Conference 2021



# MAY 2021 Calendar



Subscribe to this monthly newsletter to receive regular updates from the Regional Programme for Africa.

UNDP's Regional Programme for Africa contributes to regional development by addressing challenges facing Africa and amplifying opportunities related to the priorities and aspirations defined by the African Union (AU) and other regional entities.

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MAY

Regional Programme Document (RPD 2022-2025) consultations

4 MAY

AU20 Methodology Workshop with development practitioners and academic experts

6 MAY (TBC)

EU Progress Update on the Joint Regional Peace and Security Programme implemented by UNDP-UNFPA-UN Women

11 MAY

Workshop with the African Centre for Research and Study on Terrorism (ACSRT) to introduce the Early Warning/ Early Response and PVE Toolkit to the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS)

11 MAY

Peace and Security and SGBV Preliminary Session for Mid-Term Review bringing together the partners working on Peace and Security/SGBV

12 MAY

PVE Africa Community of Practice Session on Sharing Best Practices to Mainstream Human Rights Based Approach in PVE

14 MAY (TBC)

Workshop with the African Centre for Research and Study on Terrorism (ACSRT) to introduce the Early Warning/Early Response and PVE Toolkit to the South African Development Community (SADC)

20 MAY (TBC)

Virtual launch of the civil society organizations (CSO)-led Network on Selection, Prosecution, Rehabilitation and Reintegration (SPRR) for PVE for the Lake Chad Basin

25 MAY

AFRICA DAY