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**Capacity Building Workshop on  
Stakeholders Engagement on African Trade Policies  
and ECOWAS Regional Trade Policy Forum  
24-27 April, 2019  
Abuja, Nigeria**

**DTI/Workshop/ATP& ECOWAS.TPF/Rpt.**

**Final Report**

## **Report of the Capacity Building Workshop on Stakeholders Engagement on African Trade Policies and ECOWAS Regional Trade Policy Dialogue Forum**

**24-27 April 2019, Grand Pela Hotel & Suites, Abuja, Nigeria**

1. The Capacity Building workshop on Stakeholder Engagement on African Trade Policies and ECOWAS Regional Trade Policy Dialogue Forum took place in Abuja, Nigeria, from April 24 to 28, 2018 at the Grand Pela Hotel & Suites. The Workshop brought together officials from African Union Member States within ECOWAS region (Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, The Gambia and Togo) and National and Regional Private Sector Organizations, Civil Society Organizations and Traditional Leaders, Research Institutions and Universities, as well as Think Tanks from within and outside the ECOWAS region. The Workshop was also attended by representatives from the Common Market of Eastern and Southern African (COMESA), the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), and the Union of Maghreb Arab (UMA); Development and Technical Partners (United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) and GIZ); and Officials from the AU Commission (Department of Trade and Industry). A complete list of participants is appended as Annex 1.

2. The main objectives of the Workshop were to: build knowledge and expertise of all stakeholders on priority trade issues focusing on the AfCFTA; improve knowledge on the effectiveness of existing Regional/National Trade Policy Dialogue Platforms; build knowledge and expertise on stakeholders' engagement and participation in the trade policy process; improve the participation opportunities for BMOs, CSOs, academia and research institutions in the trade policy process within ECOWAS; strengthen the culture of dialogue and inclusiveness in ECOWAS and discuss elements for a comprehensive strategy for stakeholder's engagement and policy dialogue on African trade policies.

3. The Workshop was is in line with BIAT Action Plan's policy recommendation to enhance the role of the organized private sector, informal private sector and women in trade policy formulation, which identifies as one of the immediate/short term targets the establishment of regular formal platforms to foster trade policy dialogue. The activity was also in line with Decision on the AfCFTA (Assembly/AU/Dec. 692 (XXXI) of the 31<sup>st</sup> Ordinary Session, 1 - 2 July 2018, Nouakchott, Mauritania, which calls upon AU Member States to *"undertake broad-based national awareness campaigns so that all stakeholders such as ordinary citizens and business people across Africa embrace the AfCFTA"*.

## I. Opening

4. The official opening featured statements from representatives from the AU Commission, GIZ, ECOWAS Commission and the Federal Republic Nigeria.

5. On behalf of Mr. Hussein Hassan, the Acting Director for Trade and Industry, AU Commission, Mr. Jean Bertrand, Regional Trade Advisor, within the AU Commission's Department of Trade and Industry delivered a statement. He stressed the relevance of the workshop and highlighted the three main expectations: firstly, enhancement of participants' knowledge and understanding of all the contours of the stakeholders' engagement process; secondly, mapping of national and regional platforms/mechanisms on trade policy dialogue, with a view to strengthen them or establish them where they do not exist. The third and final expectation is identification of key elements for a comprehensive strategy and roadmap for stakeholder's engagement and policy dialogue on African trade policies, especially within the context of the AfCFTA.

6. Speaking on behalf of GIZ, Ms. Ioana Lungu reaffirmed GIZ's commitment to continue supporting the Capacity Building Workshops on Stakeholders Engagement on African Trade Policies for the remaining six RECs.

7. Dr. Gbenga Gregory Obideyi, Director of Trade, ECOWAS Commission, also delivered a statement. He indicated that ECOWAS was one of the building blocks of the African Economic Community and highlighted that 13 of the 15 ECOWAS Member States have signed the AfCFTA and 09 have already ratified. He indicated that the two remaining countries will soon be coming on board. He also informed the Meeting that ECOWAS was preparing a regional offers and that going forward there would be a need to ensure that ECOWAS "Acquis" are preserved and that there should be coherence between regional and continental policies.

8. The Workshop was officially opened by Prince Ubani Jonathan, Chief Commercial Officer (Trade), Representative from the Federal Ministry of Industry, Trade and Investment of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. In his remarks, he thanked the AU Commission for choosing Nigeria to host the Workshop on Stakeholders' engagement. Regarding the AfCFTA, Mr. Ubani reassured the Meeting that Nigeria will soon sign and ratify the AfCFTA, now that the domestic process is nearly completed. Finally, he challenged participants to come up with a call for action to enhance stakeholders' engagement at the national, regional and continental levels with a view to facilitate the domestication and implementation of African trade policies and agreements.

## **II. Updates on BIAT and ongoing trade policies**

9. Representatives from the AUC Department of Trade and Industry made presentations on the BIAT, focusing on the recommendations on enhancing Stakeholders Engagement and Participation in the Trade Policy Process, preliminary findings of DTI survey on the effectiveness of ECOWAS regional /national trade policy dialogue platforms. There was also updates on key ongoing BIAT initiatives (AU Trade Observatory, AU Digital Trade and Digital Economy Strategy).

10. Participants noted that the establishment of the ATO and the development of the AU Digital Trade and Digital Economy Strategy are still at the early stage; and were therefore encouraged to actively contribute to the process through their focal points.

11. Participants raised a number of key issues: With respect to the Digital Trade and Digital Economy Strategy, the following were highlighted: the need to ensure alignment and coherence between national, regional and continental eCommerce strategies and the importance broadband penetration and of trust. Concerning the ATO, the main issues were: the sustainability of the ATO; criteria for designating members of steering committee and the need to include private sector organizations that generate raw data such as the Pan-African Manufacturers Association.

## **III. Capacity Building Workshop on Stakeholders Engagement**

12. The training was conducted by the Pan-African Institute for Development (PAID) West-Africa, with a focus on: the diagnostic of intra-African trade, theories of international and intra-African trade, mapping/profiling and analysis of stakeholders, models for conducting stakeholders engagement and dialogue as well as capacity building for stakeholders (Technical Report of the Workshop to be appended after completion).

13. Participants were also given the opportunity to share their experience in conducting stakeholders at the RECs and national levels. During the discussion on the key elements for a strategy and roadmap for stakeholders engagement, participants identified the following key points:

- Guidelines for stakeholders engagement and scorecard for monitoring progress made by countries;
- Public Private Partnership in conducting stakeholders engagement;
- Prioritization of capacity building in trade and trade-related policies and agreements for all stakeholders, in particular non-state actors;

- Alignment between national, regional and continental approach to stakeholders engagement as well as between existing initiatives;
- Inclusiveness of all categories of stakeholders;
- Institutionalization of Public Private Dialogue and stakeholders engagement, where they do not exist, and rationalization of existing ones within the AfCFTA National Committees; and
- Frequency in the conduct of stakeholders engagement.

14. Other key issues raised and discussed during the deliberations include:

- The need to refocus on other policy clusters of the BIAT Action Plan (trade information, trade facilitation, trade finance, productive capacity, factor market integration and trade-related infrastructure)
- The importance of culture and the creative economy as well as all transport subsectors;
- Equity and fairness in the AfCFTA;
- Identification of umbrella organization to represent the Private Sector in regional and national trade policy dialogue platforms; and
- Construction of regional law and domestication of regional laws in the national legal order (issues of direct and immediate effect, supranationality...).

#### **IV. ECOWAS Regional Trade Policy Dialogue Forum**

15. A representative of the ECOWAS Commission shared ECOWAS' experience of the AfCFTA negotiations, focusing on the status signing and ratification of the AfCFTA by ECOWAS Member States, the challenges faced by ECOWAS in developing a regional market access offer as well as the implications of the entry into force of the AfCFTA for some ECOWAS countries only rather than the entire region. He also shared the ECOWAS approach to trade policy formulation, negotiation and implementation, focusing on the proposed ECOWAS Trade Policy Committee with sub-Committees on topical issues. The ETPC will to provide ECOWAS with a platform to adjust to the rapidly changing environment facilitate the implementation of the Common Trade Policy once it is adopted, manages and decides on the outcome of trade negotiations.

16. During the discussion, Participants raised a number of issues, including the need to ensure the inclusiveness of the ETPC; the importance of effective enforcement mechanism to ensure application of trade policies and agreements by Member States; the need to address issues affecting sub-regional integration in ECOWAS.

## **V. Visit to Abuja Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI)**

17. On Thursday, 25 April 2019, Participants made a visit to Abuja Chamber of Commerce and Industry and discovered a number of initiatives promoted by ACCI to build private sector's capacity and address dispute resolution between members of the business community, which are provided by the Convention Centre, BEST Centre, Dispute Resolution Centre and the Office Complex.

18. Prince Adetokunbo Kayode, President of the ACCI, stressed that based on their own assessment, Nigeria should join the AfCFTA. He urged stakeholders to rethink funding for SMEs and to further promote and support the women and youth in entrepreneurship.

## **VI. Main Recommendations**

19. Participants discussed and endorsed the following recommendations:

### **A. Member States**

- 1) Member States (MS) are encouraged to enhance the role of the organized private sector, informal private sector, youth and women as well as civil society organizations and other stakeholders in trade policy formulation, in particular in the development of their AfCFTA National Strategies, as espoused in Agenda 2063;
- 2) MS are encouraged to involve traditional leaders when designing national, regional and continental trade policies considering the role they can play in mobilizing the grassroots during the implementation phase;
- 3) MS are encouraged to institutionalise Public Private dialogue and stakeholders engagement, where they do not exist, and rationalize existing ones;
- 4) MS are encouraged to domesticate regional and continental trade agreements as well as the Boosting Intra-Africa Trade (BIAT) Action Plan in their National Legislations and Development Plans;
- 5) Private Sector organizations and other non-state actors are encouraged to partner with national government in mobilizing resources for supporting stakeholders engagement; and
- 6) MS should prioritize capacity building on trade and trade-related issues, in particular for non-state actors, in order to enhance their capacity to participate in stakeholders' engagement.

### **B. Member States, RECs and AUC**

- 1) RECs and AUC should support MS in conducting capacity building for non-state stakeholders on African trade policies and trade agreement.

- 2) MS, RECs and AUC should support Private Sector training institutions, Civil Society Organizations, Universities, and academia to enhance their capacity in African trade policies and agreements;
- 3) MS, RECs and AUC should work with Private Sector training institutions, Civil Society Organizations, and academia in building stakeholders' capacity in African trade policies and agreements;
- 4) AUC and the RECs should undertake regular briefing and updates on ongoing African trade policies and agreements in order to strengthen stakeholders' capacity;
- 5) AUC should develop guidelines to facilitate stakeholders' engagement as well as a scorecard to monitor stakeholders engagement at the national, regional and continental levels;
- 6) MS, RECs and AUC are encouraged to identify and build capacity of stakeholders in the area of trade policy in order to strengthen engagement at national , regional and continental levels;
- 7) MS, RECs and AUC are encouraged to develop and implement an inter-linked national, regional and continental dialogue strategy and roadmap for effective and all-inclusive trade policy formulation and implementation, in order to ensure ownership of the process, especially within the context of the AfCFTA; and
- 8) MS, RECs and AUC are urged to rethink funding options for SMEs in Africa, given their importance with respect to employment creation and economic growth.

**C. AUC, RECs and Development Partners**

- 1) The AUC and RECs should mobilize Development and Technical Partners, such as GIZ, UNECA (Pan African Institute for Development (IDEP)), to establish or strengthen stakeholders engagement mechanisms and to build/strengthen the capacities of Governments, Non-State Actors, and Chambers of Commerce with respect to trade policy design, domestication and implementation;
- 2) AUC should work with technical partners, such as Coalition for Dialogue on Africa (CoDA), TRAPCA, TRALAC, Africa Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF) in developing and implementing Stakeholder Engagement Strategies for Member States and RECs.
- 3) The AUC's Department of Trade and Industry and the ACBF should undertake a mapping exercise of existing capacity building institutions in the area of trade policy in Africa.

## **VII. Way Forward**

20. As a way forward, Participants agreed that:

- AUC should share the Report of the Workshop by Friday, 3 May, 2019;
- ECOWAS Member States with established trade policy dialogue platforms will share the recommendations from the workshop the next meeting of their national trade policy dialogue committee; and
- ECOWAS Member States without trade policy dialogue platforms will emulate other Member States by establishing such platforms.

21. The Workshop also noted specific commitments from the following countries:

- Nigeria will consult with the Federal Ministry of Industry, Trade and Investment on the way forward regard the implementation of recommendations from the Workshop. Thereafter, the identified stakeholders will work with the Federal Government towards the implementation of the Workshop recommendations;
- The Gambia and Senegal will share the workshop recommendations with their National Committee during the next meeting; and
- Togo will share the workshop recommendations with the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry for decision.

## **VIII. Closing**

22. The Workshop was officially closed by Mr. Yohanna Zacks, Senior Commercial Officer, Federal Ministry of Industry, Trade and Investment, Federal Republic of Nigeria.