

## **tralac Alumni Workshop 2019 Report**

tralac hosted its 2019 Alumni Workshop in Nairobi, Kenya, 5 to 6 December. The participants were alumni of tralac's training programmes, including the post-graduate diploma and Masters degree programme, the tralac certificate course: International Trade Law and Policy for Africa's Development, e-Learning courses and internships.

Trudi Hartzenberg, tralac Executive Director, opened the workshop emphasising the significance of trade-related capacity building for Africa especially at a time when the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) is being established and the global trade governance architecture is being challenged. Trudi further underlined the alumni contribution to tralac's research, training and policy advocacy. The workshop covered a range of topics including the AfCFTA, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), women, youth and trade. Alumni were presenters and also chaired the Workshop sessions.

**Session 1**, chaired by Dr. Henry Mutai, CEO of the Kenyan Law School, focused on the global perspective in achieving the SDGs and where Africa's youth fit in. Panellists included George Lwanda of UNDP, Heribital Maluleki of Mpumalanga Economic Growth Agency, and Carol Muumbi of Kenyan Ministry of Agriculture, Horticultural Crops Directorate.

Carol stressed that agriculture is significant to Kenya's economic growth, and presents vast opportunities for the youth. She, however, noted youth's negative perception towards agriculture and limited participation in agriculture due to lack of access to land and inadequate skills. Carol observed the need for agriculture-related capacity building to transform the youth's mindset and develop agricultural skills and disseminate information.

George discussed youth unemployment and women labour participation on the African continent. He revealed that youth unemployment remains high on the continent, and that female labour participation are generally lower than male participation rates. George further noted that, between 2005 and 2016, male labour force participation rate declined slightly (from 69% to 68%); while female labour participation rates rose from (53% to 55%).

Heribital argued that youth participation in the agricultural value chain can be increased through reducing costs of doing business (finance costs, infrastructure, input supply, research and development, information and market analysis, policy reforms), market development, introduction of bioenergy (biodiesel, bioethanol) in agricultural production.

**Session 2**, chaired by Professor Gerhard Erasmus – tralac Associate, gave an update of the AfCFTA particularly phase 1 negotiations and preparations for phase 2. Panellists included Brian Mureverwi of the AUC, Batanai Chikwene of UNECA, and Emily Mburu of EAC Secretariat.

Batanai and Brian shared that the AfCFTA Agreement entered into force on 30<sup>th</sup> May 2019, phase 1 negotiations outstanding issues (i.e. tariff schedules, services commitments, rules of origin, trade remedies and infant industry guidelines, and SEZ regulations) are expected to be concluded by January 2020, the AfCFTA Secretariat will be established in Accra by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020, and trading under the AfCFTA is expected to start on 1 July 2020. They also indicated that Phase 2 negotiations (investment, competition policy and intellectual property rights) are expected to be concluded by June 2020.

Emily deliberated on services trade liberalisation under the AfCFTA. She accentuated services' role in supporting structural transformation and sustainable development. Emily noted that services have become significant as intermediates in every sector underlining services' role in manufacturing and primary industries. She noted that e-commerce and digital trade, gender and private sector inclusion issues not included on the AfCFTA trade in services agenda.

**Session 3**, chaired by Precious Dlamini of Eswatini Customs Department, focused on the implementation of the AfCFTA noting the importance of national implementation strategies, improving Africa's trade and trade-related data with a special attention to the African Trade Observatory and National Trade Portals. Panellists were Kelvin Nkai of Kenyan Export Promotion Council, Etienne Cham Bam and Wilfried Deudjui Mbouwe both of Cameroon National Shippers' Council.

Kelvin reflected on Kenya's participation in the AfCFTA and Kenya Export Promotion and Branding Agency (BrandKE) plans to harness the AfCFTA. In addition to be among the first states to ratify the AfCFTA Agreement and bid for the AfCFTA Secretariat, Kenya has adopted a draft national strategy to harness AfCFTA benefits. BrandKE is an institution entrusted with export promotion, national branding initiatives and policies to promote Kenya's export of goods and services. BrandKE's plans to take advantage of the AfCFTA are outlined in its new strategic plan, which focuses on, *inter alia*, developing, diversifying and branding Kenya's export products and markets.

Etienne shared Cameroon's national implementation strategy for the AfCFTA. The strategy proposes financing plan for implementing the AfCFTA, and excludes from liberalisation products such as wheat flour, sugar, pasta, cement, bathing soap and shower gels, crude and refined palm oils, aluminium, natural fruit juice. The strategy priority areas for implementing the AfCFTA include, among others, government officials, civil society and private sector training, revision and creation of new legal and institutional framework, rehabilitation and construction of export oriented industry infrastructure, reduction of costs of doing business, compliance with trade facilitation commitments and reduction of NTBs, development of regional value chains and creation of a National AfCFTA Committee.

Wilfried shared his experience in building a trade portal for the Cameroon National Shippers Council, providing lessons for the African Trade Observatory and National Trade Portals. He noted that an

effective trade portal should be transparent, include all stakeholders, contain comprehensive and timely trade-related data and information. He noted the importance of regular updates and maintenance of the website.

**Session 4**, by Trudi, gave an update on tralac's 2019 Review and new Strategy for 2020-2025. She highlighted the need to focus on the 21<sup>st</sup> century trade and related issues such as industrialisation/productive capacity development, as well as interconnections between (services and goods) trade, trade facilitation, investment, competition, intellectual property rights, sustainable development agenda (trade, climate/environment, labour, gender and youth) and institutional imperatives.

**Session 5**, chaired by Patience Dlamini of Eswatini Revenue Services, discussed domestic governance matters for the AfCFTA focusing mainly on compliance with trade agreements, tariffs, customs, revenue management and services regulation. Panellists were Dumisani Mbambo the Deputy Director Commissioner of the International Trade Administration Commission (South Africa), Joshua Levendal of South African Revenue Services (SARS) and Louis Gitinywa of Kigali Attorneys LLP.

Dumisani underscored the need for industrial development to enable African countries compete at both regional and global levels. Joshua reminded participants that SARS implements, administers and interprets trade agreements at the border. With respect to the AfCFTA, SARS has done nothing yet and is awaiting formal request from the South African Department of Trade and Industry to operationalise agreement once all legislative matters has been concluded.

Louis shared Rwanda's national implementation strategy for implementing the AfCFTA. He focused primarily on the tourism and hospitality which is one of the leading services sector in the economy, competing with cities like Cape Town and Marrakesh. Rwanda Tourism Policy Framework key pillars include, *inter alia*, capacity building, infrastructure development (e.g. Kigali Convention Centre, Kigali basketball Arena), land and environmental sustainability, investments and financing and visa on arrival policy. Louis also noted challenges the tourism sector is facing including cross-border tensions, security, poor infrastructure, lack of skilled workforce and diseases (e.g. Ebola) in the EAC region.

**Session 6**, chaired by William Mwanza of the World Bank (Malawi), deliberated on regional and AfCFTA initiatives on the elimination of NTBs. Vonesai Hove – NTB Expert and Advisor to the AUC on NTBs – discussed the operation of the NTB elimination mechanisms under the AfCFTA, TFTA and Borderless Alliance (ECOWAS + WAEMU). She told the participants that to manage NTBs there has to be transparency, efficiency and enforceability. Vonesai underscored that the existing NTB elimination mechanisms are *ad hoc* in nature and that there is still a need to have systemic solution to NTBs.

## Gala Dinner

Amb. (Dr.) Amina Mohammed, Kenya Minister for Sports, Culture and Heritage, was the Guest Speaker at the Alumni Workshop Dinner. Her speech focused on embedding trade and gender in Africa's trade agenda. She stressed that 'trade policies and practice tend to have different outcomes for men and women, particularly in the African economies, because of the differences in the traditionally qualified roles, responsibilities, rights and opportunities that our societies assign to men and women'. She urged African countries to ensure their domestic policies and laws provide for:

- gender-related capacity-building mechanisms (e.g. entrepreneurship and business training, skill development and access to finance, etc.);
- credit and entrepreneurship programs;
- women's access to market information and opportunities;
- gender-based value chain;
- digital inclusion

The workshop concluded with participants making proposals for follow up work, for tralac's research, training and policy advocacy. The proposals included, work on:

- Agricultural production and value addition;
- Streamlining women and youth in policy;
- Design a course/training for women and youth empowerment, trade and development, trade negotiations as well as domestic implementation and compliance with trade agreements;
- Focus on trade in services, investment regulation, intellectual property rights, competition policy, industrial policy, e-commerce and digital trade (e.g. trade tech, e-services, data flows/transfers etc), consumer protection;
- Systemic issues on NTB removal – build on the existing initiatives;
- Harmonisation of national and regional commercial laws; and
- Africa's global trade and economic integration.

tralac alumni are represented across the continent, and beyond, in leading trade-related positions. The African Union Commission, Afreximbank, the African Development Bank, the Economic Commission for Africa, Secretariats of Regional Economic Communities, national trade-related institutions including government departments, regulators and civil society organisations, as well as private sector organisations count tralac alumni among their experts. tralac benefits enormously from the wealth of

knowledge, experience and expertise within the alumni network. Our alumni keep us posted on trade developments, share their experience and insights and assist us to remain informed of current and emerging trade issues that define Africa's trade and integration agenda. We'd also like to thank our development partners for making tralac's work possible.

We'd like to thank all our alumni for continuing to work with us to ensure that rules-based governance and trade contribute to Africa's sustainable development.