

PRESS RELEASE

ADDIS ABABA: 27 NOVEMBER, 2019

AFRICAN BUSINESS ROUNDTABLE ENGAGED THE AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION AND COALITION FOR DIALOGUE IN AFRICA IN ADDIS-ABABA, ETHIOPIA ON 26 - 27 NOVEMBER, 2019



H.E Albert Muchanga, Commissioner, Department of Trade & Industry, African Union Commission

African Business Roundtable (ABR) together with heads of other business associations, trade groups and stakeholders in African private sector development, engaged the African Union Commission (AUC) and the Coalition for Dialogue on Africa (CoDA) in very robust discussions at the 'Policy Dialogue of African Business Associations on Implementing the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Agreement.

The stakeholder dialogue held at the Plenary Hall, 2nd Floor, Old Conference Building, African Union Commission in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on 26 and 27 November, 2019 was jointly organized by the African Union Commission (AUC) and the Coalition for Dialogue on Africa (CoDA) in collaboration with the African Development Bank (AfDB), African Export – Import Bank (AFREXIM) and the AfroChampions Initiative

The main objective of the Forum was to bring African business organizations and leading businesses together to gain a deeper understanding of AfCFTA objectives, landscape, sectoral policies and institutional arrangements with a view to supporting the implementation process and taking advantage of the opportunities presented by a continental single market, which the operational phase is expected to commence in July 2020.

African Business Roundtable was represented by Samuel Dossou – Aworet and Samuel Ayodele, President/Chairman of the Board and the Executive Secretary respectively. The Forum was well attended with more than 150 delegates from leading pan-Africa business associations, regional business councils and sectoral interest groups.

His Excellency Olusegun Obasanjo, former President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and Chair of CoDA gave the ‘Key Note Address’ at the Forum; while H.E. Albert Muchanga, Commissioner, Department of Trade & Industry (DTI), African Union Commission (AUC) gave the ‘Opening Remarks’. Representatives of AFREXIM Bank, Africa Development Bank, Africa Capacity Building Foundation, Afrochampions Initiative all gave highlights of their institutions’ activities in support of AfCFTA implementation. ABR President, Samuel Dossou-Aworet, chaired the Panel Session on - ***Regional Policies in Support of AfCFTA : Productive Capacities, Trade Facilitation, Trade Defense Measures & Trade Deflection on 26th November, 2019.*** During the session, he highlighted the need for coordinated governance structure and capacity building, simplified and harmonized cross-border regulations, procedures and standards along the transit corridors, improvements of transport and logistics, elimination of NTBs, and improvements of security which will result in significant and measurable reductions in transport time and cost requirements. Mr. Dossou stressed the importance to improve productive capacities and facilitate trade in Africa through provision of quality trade related infrastructure to enhance export competitiveness and investment readiness.

He stated that ABR will make significant contributions by undertaking concrete projects in this regard, such as the ‘Project Epine dorsale (Backbone Project), an integrated transportation infrastructure project involving Construction of Deep seaport, railway line connecting Benin Republic, Niger Republic, Northwest and Southwest Nigeria and opening up other landlocked countries in West Africa through a Dry Port which is completed and ready to go into operation.



PAFTRAC MEETING, 27 Nov. 2019. Sitting L-R Dr. Hippolyte Fofack, Afrexim Bank, Samuel Dossou-Aworet, President ABR & Vice Chair – PAFTRAC, Professor Pat Utomi, Chair PAFTRAC EXCO, Danilo Ventura - Sec. Gen of CEEIA and Dr. Amany Asfour, Vice Chair - PAFTRAC

On Wednesday 27th November, 2019 a meeting of the **Pan African Trade and Investment Committee (PAFTRAC)** was convened at the same venue. ABR President, Samuel Dossou-Aworet is a member of the Executive Council and Vice Chairman of the Committee.

PAFTRAC aims** to provide the framework for facilitating the participation and engagement of the African Private Sector in trade and investment issues in Africa, including trade and investment policy formulation and trade negotiations and implementation of trade agreements. **The Committee will serve as an advocacy platform to galvanize the views of the African Private Sector on the ground and transmit those to policy makers to strengthen the foundation of public-private partnership in support of the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCTA)

The ABR President at both meetings, called on all stakeholders present to embrace and support ABR and invited business men and women to join its membership. He informed delegates that ABR will be thirty years in 2020 and a book will be published to provide insight into the organization's life circle to date so as to shed light on both its achievements and shortcomings and learn from the experiences.

He promised the audience that the new ABR that will emerge under his leadership will make good governance the corner stone of its operations and activities.

Mrs. Souad Aden-Osman, Executive Director, Coalition for Dialogue on Africa who moderated the Policy Dialogue emphasized the **need for the private sector to come together and quickly establish the African Business Council (ABC)**. H.E. Albert Muchanga, Commissioner, DTI at the African Union Commission also echoed this need all through the dialogue. CoDA and the AUC role in the process of establishing the ABC is mainly advisory and to facilitate. Mrs. Aden-Osman promised that CoDA will assist to soon convene a meeting of all the Regional Business Councils, Pan-African Business Associations and Sectoral groups after the Business Sector Interim Working Group constituted by the Business Associations at the Forum submits a draft of the Working Documents for the establishment of ABC so as to ensure inclusivity .

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