

# 9<sup>th</sup> Africa Think Tank Summit



9<sup>ème</sup> SOMMET DES THINK TANKS D'AFRIQUE

**Linking Evidence, Policies, and Practice to Support the Implementation  
of the AfCFTA Agreement**



8 - 10 November 2023



Intercontinental Hotel, Lusaka, Zambia



**COMMUNIQUE**

## PREAMBLE

We, the participants of the 9th Africa Think Tank Summit, convened in Lusaka, Zambia under the theme **“Linking Evidence, Policies, and Practice to Support the Implementation of the AfCFTA Agreement;”** have gathered to deliberate on key issues and challenges related to the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and its successful implementation. The main objective was to bring together researchers, policymakers, practitioners (including the private sector), and stakeholders from across Africa to deliberate on the critical role of evidence, policies, and practice in supporting the effective implementation of the AfCFTA Agreement.



### RECOGNIZING

the essential role of think tanks and research institutions in generating evidence-based policy recommendations, fostering dialogue, and providing technical support to governments, the private sector, civil society, and other stakeholders.



### NOTING

that the successful implementation of the AfCFTA requires a robust evidence base, encompassing comprehensive research, data analysis, and knowledge exchange, to inform policy formulation and decision-making processes at the national, regional, and continental levels.



### ACKNOWLEDGING

the leadership of the AfCFTA Secretariat and the African Union (AU) and its organs in spearheading the AfCFTA and commending the efforts of member states in ratifying and implementing the agreement.



### ACKNOWLEDGING

the importance of policy coherence and coordination among African governments, Regional Economic Communities (RECs), and relevant institutions to ensure the effective implementation of the AfCFTA and the maximization of its benefits.



### UNDERSTANDING

the transformative potential of the AfCFTA in driving economic growth, fostering regional integration, and improving the livelihoods of African citizens. With a firm commitment to translating knowledge into actionable policies, we have engaged in fruitful discussions, and shared experiences, and developed a set of actionable recommendations to accelerate the implementation of the AfCFTA.



### RECOGNIZING

the need for enhanced capacity building, particularly in the areas of trade facilitation, customs procedures, rules of origin, and standards harmonization, to enable businesses to fully capitalize on the opportunities presented by the AfCFTA.

## RESOLUTIONS

Based on our deliberations, **COLLECTIVELY** agree to:

### Take **OWNERSHIP**



of our narrative through a strategic emphasis on and investment in evidence-based data that not only challenges prevailing global narratives concerning Africa but also guides the formulation of decisions and policies.

### **FOSTER**



synergistic collaboration and knowledge exchange among think tanks, research institutions, policymakers, and practitioners by instituting a continental platform dedicated to constructive dialogue, the exchange of insights, and the dissemination of exemplary practices and lessons acquired.

### **ADVOCATE**



for the development of openly accessible repositories and databases, streamlining the sharing and widespread circulation of research discoveries, policy synopses, and exemplar practices related to the AfCFTA.

### **EXPEDITE**



the creation of a permanent mechanism to sustain consistent and structured dialogue between African governments, Regional Economic Communities (RECs), and think tanks. This mechanism aims to ensure the congruence of policies, the dissemination of information, and the harmonization of efforts in AfCFTA implementation.

### **STRENGTHEN**



the national and regional committees devoted to AfCFTA implementation. These committees should encompass representatives from think tanks, governmental bodies, private sector associations, and civil society organizations to ensure efficient coordination, monitoring, and evaluation of implementation endeavours.

### **ENHANCE**



capacity-building initiatives targeted at customs officials, trade facilitation agencies, and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to augment their comprehension of AfCFTA regulations, procedures, and requisites.

### **INTRODUCE**



AfCFTA-centric training programs and platforms designed to share best practices, provide technical support, and bolster the skills of pertinent stakeholders in trade negotiation and dispute resolution methods.

## PROMOTE



the establishment of specialized trade information portals and assistance desks, offering user-friendly access to trade procedure particulars, tariff information, rules of origin, and market prospects within the AfCFTA, with a focus on benefiting SMEs and businesses.

## ESTABLISH



a dedicated AfCFTA Research Fund led through joint efforts under the leadership of the AfCFTA Secretariat, and the Afreximbank to support think tanks and research institutions in conducting evidence-based research, policy analysis, and impact assessments on various dimensions of the AfCFTA.

## CALL UPON



the African Union Commission to recognize the vital role of African think tanks and to actively engage them in the G20 deliberations, ensuring that the voices and expertise of African researchers and scholars are central to shaping global policies for the benefit of the entire continent.

## CONCLUSION

As representatives of think tanks and delegates, we express our contentment with the 2023 Africa Think Tank Summit, recognizing its significant role in providing an invaluable platform for comprehensive and inclusive discussions pertaining to the implementation of the AfCFTA. The Summit facilitated candid conversations involving key stakeholders, including think tanks, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), and policymakers, allowing us to explore a wide spectrum of challenges and opportunities. These constructive dialogues will contribute to the development of mutually agreed-upon solutions that will greatly assist in the successful execution of the AfCFTA.

We extend our heartfelt appreciation to the organizers (African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF), Ministry of Commerce, Trade and Industry (MCTI) of Zambia, and Regional Network of Agricultural Policy Research Institutes (ReNAPRI)), sponsors (William and Flora Hewlett Foundation and Visa Foundation), and partners (Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) and African Economic Research Consortium (AERC)) for their unwavering support in facilitating this summit. We are committed to advancing these resolutions and call upon African governments, the African Union, Regional Economic Communities (RECs), and all stakeholders to implement the proposed actions, ensuring their alignment with national, regional, and continental development agendas.

We maintain our dedication to bolstering the effective implementation of the AfCFTA through evidence-based policy formulation, adept coordination, and continuous knowledge exchange. We pledge to collectively strive towards a more interconnected, prosperous, and inclusive Africa.

***Presented in Lusaka, Zambia, this 10 November 2023***



THE AFRICAN CAPACITY BUILDING FOUNDATION | FONDATION POUR LE RENFORCEMENT DES CAPACITES EN AFRIQUE

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