

ROUND TABLE

Innovating Africa's marketplace : towards a new framework for investment and trade

Why this high level round table ?

Several developments coincide today which force innovative thinking.

The African Union (AU) and many governments are asking whether the trade and development agreements with the European Union (EU), in particular the Cotonou Agreement with the ACP Group of countries, have delivered on expectations. European experts too are expressing doubts. Recently, the outgoing President of the European Commission has proposed to start negotiating an African-European Free Trade Agreement as part of an economic partnership between the two continents.

Science, digital technologies and market developments are driving the global value chains of businesses. But the input of business in the design of the Cotonou Agreements and in the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPA) has been limited. Analysis of business' needs in the design of the Continental Free Trade Agreement (CFTA) is unclear still.

At the same time, the Africa Investment Forum emphasizes the need of massive investments to reach the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It favours broad based partnerships with the private sector. But which framework conditions for investment are needed in this new economic context?

One must question if traditional approaches in trade and investment agreements will be sufficient to help African economies jump like gazelles, using new technologies in manufacturing, agriculture and services. More development funding and minor concessions in trade agreements with Europe show goodwill but not a comprehensive vision. Fragmentation of policy and instruments persists and disturbs investments and markets. Comprehensive innovation of the economic relationship is necessary and urgent.

The workshop will focus on the framework conditions which the private sector requires in Africa. The agile strategies of enterprises, driven by changing science & technologies and by customer demand in dominant markets, require efficiently functioning open markets, based on transparency and the rule of law, and constructive business-government cooperation in the general interest.

The brainpower of networks of experts with different backgrounds can help to design the investment and trade pathways to support sustainable economic growth in Africa in the digitally driven economy.

Objectives

The objectives of the event are to discuss, from the perspective of the needs of market actors, including SMEs, what kind of market integration and trade frameworks Africa requires.

It aims to build tripartite dialogues between government, business, academia thinkers, operating in an ambiance of trust and openness, to stimulate creative and evidence based exchange. The conditions for economic growth in Africa for this are better than before, due to emerging new thinking; this needs to be bridged and integrated in a strategic vision which can serve both public and private sector decision makers.

Program

9h00 Opening session

Chair : Prof. Dr. Stefan Schepers, director a.i. AECIT

Welcome

By Jon Foster-Pedley, Dean of Henley Business School Southern-Africa.

Innovation of the EU-AU economic framework : new thinking for sustainable growth

Dr. Günther Nooke, Africa Advisor the the Chancellor of Germany

Dr. Khulu Mbatha, Advisor International Relations to the SA Presidency

9h30 Session I : Creating strategic agility through designing innovation ecosystems :

creating the complex framework conditions for economic growth in industry, in agriculture and services, in management and in governance.

Introduction of the discussion by

Prof. Thembela Hillie, Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (SA)

Dr. Daan Dutoit, deputy director general, Department Science and Technology (SA)

11h30 Session II: Innovative trade and investment agreements with Europe :

African-European Centre for Investment & Trade

Kirstenhof Office Park, Block A, 1 Witkoppen Road, Paulshof
PO Box 2890, Sunninghill, 2157, South Africa
t. +27 10 730 1350 e. info@aceit.africa www.aceit.africa



multi-lateral trade agreements and market efficiency, effects of new technologies.

Introduction of the discussion :

Prof. Davide Castellani, Henley Business School (UK and SA)

Bernadette Zeiller, Head International Trade, Johannesburg Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SA)

13h00 Lunch

14h00 Session III : The role of government in creating framework conditions :

gazelle-leaping through inter-action between business and governance efficacy.

Introduction of the discussion :

John Kaninda, African Development Bank (Ivory Coast)

Karolina Zurek, senior advisor Trade Council (Sweden)

15h30 Session IV :

A new technological and trade context : Africa leaping forward :

new ways of competitiveness (in manufacturing, agriculture, services), spill-over effects of technology on sustainability, role of education and training.

Introduction of the discussion by

Prof. Andrew Godley, director Center for Entrepreneurship, Reading (UK)

Dr. Thami Mazwai, Chief Advisor to the SA Minister of Small Business Development (SA)

17h00 Conclusions : the way forward