

The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) – an opportunity for BioTrade?

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AfCFTA in brief

- Flagship project of Agenda 2063 of 55 AU Member States 54 have signed and 47 have ratified
- Single African market for goods and services; free movement of persons, capital, and investment
- Largest FTA: 1.3 billion people, combined GDP of approximately US\$ 3.4 trillion
- Very early stage of implementation: October 2022 launched AfCFTA Guided Trade Initiative
 - Only 8 countries, only ceramic tiles, batteries, tea, coffee, processed meat products, corn starch, sugar, pasta, glucose syrup, dried fruits, and sisal fibre
- Environment and biodiversity remain national prerogatives

Which countries have ratified the AfCFTA Agreement?

Listed by date on which the AICITA instrument of ratification was deposited with the AUC Chairperson





To find out more about the African Continential Free Trade Area (AfCETA) and to download the consolidated tast of the Agreement and other key documents, please visit the trafac websile at ______



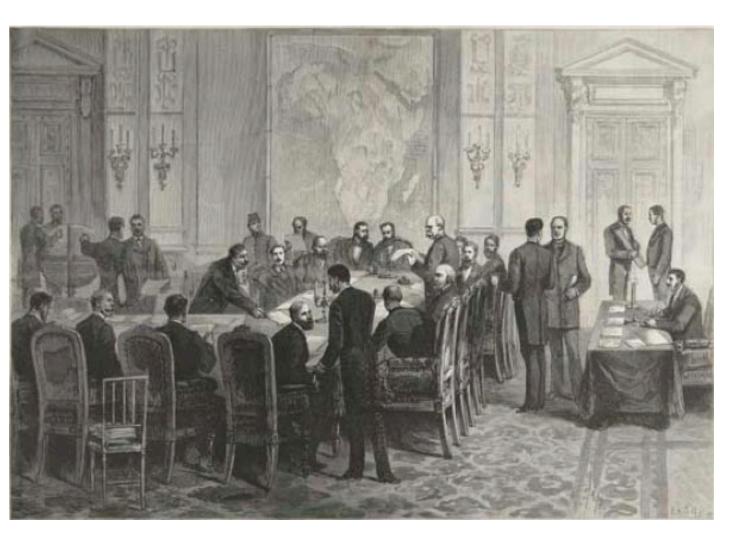




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Some African realities

- Communities and ecosystems artificially divided by colonial borders (1884 Berlin Conference)
- Youngest region, population expected to double
- Biodiversity still very important for livelihoods
- Significant, rising pressures on ecosystems, to be accelerated by climate change impacts
- Traditional natural products still widely used
- Significant informal (sometimes illegal) trade across open borders – women and SMEs
- Emerging formal biotrade sector in some places
- ABS measures creating significant obstacles
- Support for multilateral benefit sharing, IPLCs







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BioTrade Threats and Opportunities

- Nature-based Solutions: land grabs for "carbon colonialism" but AfCTFA aims to support development of carbon market across Africa – holistic?
- Economies of scale: small domestic markets limit potential for growth **but** free trade in biological resources could move value adding back to Africa
- Single resource focus: "nothing left but baobabs" but product diversification may support ecosystem-based approaches (and restoration)
- Limited skills and capital: many areas rich in biodiversity lack know-how and investment **but** free movement of persons and investment may help
- Shared GR and aTK: potential "race to the bottom" but coordinated approach, information sharing, and common standards could address
- Modern biotech: DSI and synbio can eliminate need for biodiversity but capacity development and tech transfer could keep benefits in Africa



Ensuring AfCFTA delivers for people and planet

- Adequate support for biodiversity custodians is key – recognised in IP Protocol
- Don't impose conservation burdens on the poorest
- Trade is good only if sustainable
- Plan to diversify value chains
- Support ecosystem restoration
- Increase local share of benefits
- Educate consumers
- Change will come from the bottom up or not at all







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