

WORKSHOP SESSION AND NAMC/TRALAC BOOK LAUNCH

“AGRICULTURE AND THE AFRICAN CONTINENTAL FREE TRADE AREA”

DESCRIPTION

The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) is part of the African Union's broader push to achieve greater regional integration and development and its main aim is to boost intra-African trade. Africa's intra-regional trade lies well below that of other regions. In 2016, intra-African exports made up 18 percent of total exports, compared to 59 and 69 percent for intra-Asia and intra-Europe exports, respectively. The figures for imports are similar. Therefore, in terms of intra-regional trade, Africa has yet to reach its full potential. However, the implementation of the AfCFTA could be the catalyst that moves the region towards high levels of intra-Africa trade. A range of agricultural trade issues and regulatory barriers still raise transaction costs and limit the movement of goods, services and capital across African borders. Effective solutions are needed if Africa is to make real progress towards improving intra-Africa trade. The solutions need to go further than current focus on hard infrastructure investment, border posts improvements and customs and systems enhancement.

The session critically examines intra-African agricultural trade and what the liberalization of this trade under the auspices of the AfCFTA may mean for the continent. A comprehensive review of African agriculture is provided in the book chapters, with the overall historical perspective introduced to set a base for understanding of the sector and regional perspectives presented to emphasize the diverse nature of African agriculture. Regional trading and tariff profiles show progress made in liberalization and, more importantly, focuses on how the AfCFTA can contribute to ongoing liberalization efforts. South Africa has an important role to play in working with others to promote intra-African agricultural trade. Several chapters examine specific agricultural products that are major trade lines globally and within Africa, and these chapters examine how the AfCFTA can facilitate this. The book also give attention to the fisheries sector in Africa, and how aquaculture will contribute to the continents food supply.

The session aims to enhance knowledge among policy-makers, experts and private sector on requisite policies and measures for fostering the development and strengthening of regional supply and value chains in agricultural commodities. This would contribute to the development of intra-African trade in agricultural and food products, including through the setting up and strengthening of regional agro-food supply chains.

SPEAKERS LINE-UP

- Facilitator: Dr M Kalaba (University of Pretoria)
- Yolanda Potelwa (Potatoes South Africa)
- Willemien Viljoen (Trade Law Centre)
- Thandeka Ntshangase (Hortgro)

SESSION PROGRAMME

10:30 – 10:40	Welcoming remarks and introduction – Dr S Ngqangweni
	Facilitator: Dr M Kalaba
10:40 – 10:55	<p>Session 1: Overview of agricultural performance in Africa</p> <p>Agricultural performance over the African continent since 1961: an analysis of the net production index and the net per capita index</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessing Africa's agricultural performance over the past 50 years in the perspective of the net production and per capita indices. Based upon the standard net production data many African countries have performed well, but when analysing net production per capita Africa has not performed as well due to the dramatic population's growth in most African countries. <p><i>By Thandeka Ntshangase</i></p>
10:55 – 11:10	<p>Session 2: African agricultural trade liberalisation</p> <p>African trade liberalisation: tariffs faced by intra-African trade in agricultural products and what does trade liberalisation mean for South African agriculture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The continent has high applied Most Favoured Nation tariff rates, and these rates impede intra-African agricultural exports. Tobacco and associated products face the highest average applied tariff in Africa, with these rates as high as 135% imposed by Mauritius and Seychelles. What does trade liberalisation across Africa mean for agricultural exports from South Africa? Africa is the dominant agricultural market for South Africa and the top nine African destinations are all in SADC. Elsewhere in Africa there are some excessively high tariff rates associated with several South Africa exports, suggesting that trade liberalisation in Africa and associated benefits may be significant. <p><i>By Yolanda Potelwa</i></p>
11:10 – 11:25	<p>Session 3: African agricultural trade overview</p> <p>An overview of Intra-African agriculture trade: the general trade patterns and trade in specific commodities (cocoa, coffee, tea, sugar and fisheries)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most intra-African trade takes place very close to home and under preferential access conditions. Fisheries are among the most-traded food products in the world, but the importance of this sector for food has been overlooked in Africa for many years. South Africa is the largest can sugar producers, while Swaziland is the main intra-Africa sugar supplying country; however intra-Africa sugar trade is a complicated matter. Coffee and tea are both important exports from Africa, but Asia has overtaken Africa as a source of African coffee imports, while Kenya's exports of tea to Egypt is the main component of intra-African tea trade. Cocoa beans are the number one agricultural export from Africa, but only 1% of Africa's beans are registered in intra-African trade; the same holds true for cocoa paste and butter. <p><i>By Willemien Viljoen</i></p>
11:25 – 12:20	<p>Panel discussion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thandeka Ntshangase (Hortgro-SA) Yolanda Potelwa (Potato SA) Willemien Viljoen (TRALAC)
12:20 – 12:30	<p>Closing remarks</p> <p><i>By Sifiso Ntombela</i></p>