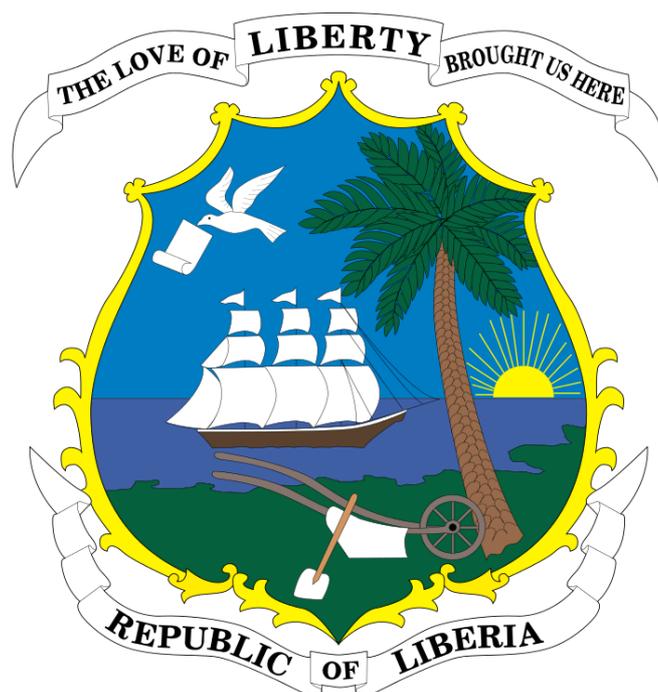


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# HIGH-LEVEL POLICY AND PRIVATE SECTOR TRADE AND INVESTMENT FACILITATION FORUM 2017



*FACILITATING TRADE AND INVESTMENT FOR DEVELOPMENT*  
Co-Hosted by Nigeria and ECOWAS Commission, in Partnership with the WTO  
Friends of Investment Facilitation for Development (FIFD)

**SPECIAL REMARKS**

**DELIVERED BY**

**H.E. AXEL M. ADDY  
MINISTER**

**The Congress Hall, Transcorp Hilton Hotel  
Abuja, NIGERIA**

**2-3, NOVEMBER 2017**

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Excellencies,  
Distinguished Delegates  
Ladies and Gentlemen,  
Good morning.

1. I bring you greetings on behalf of her Excellency Mrs. Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf and the people of Liberia and extend congratulations to the Government and People of Nigeria, the ECOWAS Commission and the WTO Friends of Investment Facilitation for Development (FIFD) for organizing this timely event that gives us all an opportunity to dialogue on how our collective efforts can facilitate trade and investment for development on the continent. Congratulations.
2. I also want to use this occasion to say to my Nigerian brothers and sisters and particularly the Government that its strategic decision to bring one of its most talented and brilliant sons in the trade community, home, Dr. Cheidu Osakwe, is a clear signal that it is committed to truly use trade and investment for the transformation of the lives of its people. I continue to admire the brilliance of this young man and the beauty of his mind, as a passionate thinker the lives and breathes trade in the interest of transforming a better tomorrow for Africa. Please join me in congratulating him for his work on this event, his ambitious work to conclude the Continental Free Trade Agreement and for being a champion for trade and investment for development on the continent.
3. Excellencies, colleagues and friends. Today I am honored to be here to make a few points on my view on the subject of facilitating trade and investment for development. Given the extensive areas for which I know many have already expressed their views, I would like to focus on just a few key points around this theme.
4. First, I believe trade and investment is the best vehicle for sustainable and inclusive economic growth and our best approach to tackling the sustainable development goals.
5. Second, I believe facilitating trade and investment for development provides the greatest opportunities with the highest returns in tackling systemic weaknesses and failures and limited capacities that get in the way of growth of the real economy.
6. Third, I believe leadership with a vision and political will at all levels of authority is the real catalyst to reforms that yield real transformations that are only realized through trade and investments.



7. Friends today we lag behind because of poor business climate, poor connectivity, poor perception of ourselves.
8. Today we have some stunning realities that we must tackle. We have inadequate institutions to deal with the majority youthful populations in our countries.
9. Today, we have limited connectivity which impacts the movement of people, goods and services across the continent. What do we say to the world, when we do not even know each other that well, because we have higher exchanges in trade with the world than we do amongst ourselves. We must trade better with ourselves before we can be better global traders.
10. Today, the institutions that should build our populations capacities for the skillsets needed to drive real trade and investments, are far and few in-between and as such Africa as an investment destination can be rather expensive. Investors are in the business of making money not charity.
11. Today, issues of governance, conflict, terrorism, and climate change, all pose significant threats to the many gains we have made over the decades, and often times negatively impacts investors perception of the continent.
12. Today many, including local, regional and international investors have no access to the multiplicities of innovations happening on the continent, because so many of our innovators, our SMEs, are hidden in the complexities of informality while driving the majority of economic transactions in our countries. It is indeed a scorecard on the trade and investment climate in our countries. We are missing our geniuses, our real entrepreneurs whom with the right exposure, right incentives, right support structures, can too share the dreams of the Tony Elumelu and Aliko Dangote's of Africa.
13. Ladies and gentlemen, I am however hopeful because all that I have mention is being tackled in so many ways. Today, mobile penetration in Africa is at 80% and this is enhancing e-commerce opportunities for our SMEs and a new type of trade and investment on the continent.
14. All across the continent you will find our countries using various models of investment for development including public private partnerships for major infrastructure projects including roads, ports, power, and telecommunications.
15. Ladies and gentlemen, Africa, is on the move and these investments are the building blocks for its transformation.



16. Today, I am hopeful because many of our countries are moving towards e-government solutions and single window platforms to improve service delivery to enhance the business climate.
17. Today, I am hopeful because the right conversations are being held with the participation of the right people, particularly the private sector, at the local, regional and multilateral levels. This event is evident of this commitment.
18. Ladies and Gentlemen, as we prepare for MC11 in Argentina, I am cognizant of the challenging negotiations of what lies ahead. Do we beat the dead horse, DDA deliverables for LDCs for which many of our countries are? Will there be consensus on discussions on services and agriculture? Do we table new positions in the interest of where we are today and where we want to go for the Africa we want – positions on e-commerce, SMEs, and trade and investment facilitation?
19. Whatever the case, Africa is and continues to be a strong voice in the multilateral trade dialogue but can only be a stronger voice when our contribution to global trade volumes sends a resounding message that while we appreciate all that the rest of the world have to sell to us, the world must appreciate all we have to sell to the rest of the world beyond our colonial trade positioning, raw materials. We can do this by first producing for us, trading amongst ourselves while strategically trading with the world.
20. With these few words, I thank you for your kind attention.